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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY 29 1982

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Our own kith and kin

By Michael Banton

PIERRE L. VAN den BERGHE:
The Ethnic Phenomenon
 301pp. Amsterdam: Elsevier. £18.95.
 0 444 01550 7

ANTHONY D. SMITH:
The Ethnic Revival
 241pp. Cambridge University Press.
 £15. (paperback, £4.95).
 0 521 23267 8

To get a visa for the United States in 1959 I had to complete a form which required me to state my "race". Shortly afterwards that particular requirement was dropped. As part of last April's Census of England and Wales it was at one time intended that we would all have to answer a question about the "race" or ethnic group to which we belonged. In the end that question too was left out, but it will probably feature in the 1991 census, when I expect that it will simply ask for our "ethnic group", or, should either of the neologisms catch on, for our "ethnicity" (Anthony D. Smith) or our "ethny" (Pierre L. van den Berghe).

Over the past fifty years there has been a tendency for the word "race" to be superseded by "ethnic group". The reasons for this are complicated by linguistic differences in the ways in which the two words are used. Since in the United States they denote groups within the nation whereas in Europe they have usually been applied either to nations or to groups of a similar order of magnitude. Underlying the change from race to ethnicity has been the recognition that the shape of such groups is not decided by their physical make-up, as if they were social projections of biological units, but by the human readiness to utilize physical differences as signs to differentiate groups. Ethnic groups are really political units, since they bring together those who share material interests as well as elements of common culture.

The extent to which the members of such a group continue to share interests depends in large part upon the political and social structure within which they move. The political machines by which the bosses of Tammany Hall and similar institutions brought out the vote in many United States cities appealed to

ethnic sentiments. Political parties sought a "balanced ticket" with the optimum spread of immigrant names. Migrants who had not heard the call of nationalism in the sending societies answered it from across the Atlantic. Buffeted and pained by the processes of adjustment, they looked back fondly and asked, as did Robert Browning in his "home thoughts" off the Spanish coast: "Here and here did England help me, - how can I help England?" No one needs reminding how the Jews and the Irish in the United States have tried to help their homelands by influencing American foreign policy. They have not been alone in this. Among the whites, ethnic sentiment was often encouraged, provided it could be harnessed by an over-riding loyalty to the state. The question about the power of assimilation was there in every school, every factory, every institution of the market place, and even, though less obviously, in every church and synagogue. Ethnic identities could be an accepted feature of the social scene because they were being steadily dissolved.

The readiness of people in Europe to respond to Nazi doctrines of race and ethnic unity seemed to bear a large responsibility for the Second World War. In the reaction that followed, people hoped that the Nazi movement would prove the last kick of a beast that was being brought under international control. In the 1950s it was easy to accept the liberal view of the withering away of ethnicity which, according to Dr Smith, had three main components. First, as industrialism came everywhere to set the tone, universalist values would predominate over the particularism of ethnic attachment. Second, mass communication would promote cultural fusion and create a mass public. Third, nation-states and nationalism would be stepping-stones in the path to a more rational regulation of world problems.

In the next decade these assumptions took a battering. There were outbreaks of antisemitism in West Germany despite the virtually complete absence of Jews. Ethnic tensions in Belgium showed no signs of abating. The Basque, Breton, Catalan and Québécois movements gained prominence and were paral-

leled in Eastern Europe and the Third World. In the United States, the federal government, concerned that there should be an end to discrimination on the ground of "race, color, religion or national origin" began an extensive operation to compile ethnic records and enforce quotas. At much the same time, but probably independently, a section of the black leadership launched a campaign for black power which implied an anti-assimilationist programme of racial separatism. Then, in Professor van den Berghe's words, the whole country went on an ethnic rampage as one ethnic group after another mobilized, partly in self-defence against black demands, Nixon's government endorsed the use of racial and ethnic criteria for employment, housing, education and civil service appointments. Ability to claim a minority status became a valuable asset and at least one white man established such a claim by simply adopting a Spanish name.

It was in such circumstances that commentators began to write about "the new ethnicity" and to ask why in many other parts of the world ethnic sentiment seemed to be reviving and finding political expression. In the United States, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued - rightly, I believe - that the American ethnic group was not a survival from the age of mass immigration but a new social form, though they did not elucidate the relations between the old form and the new. The authors of the two books under review distance themselves from this debate, but in very different ways.

Professor van den Berghe is one of the few sociologists to have taken a sympathetic interest in sociology. He appears to argue that all aspects of ethnic sentiment and behaviour can ultimately be explained in terms of biology. He would probably deny that this is his intention, but his book reads as if he adopted a reductionist position to start with and then found he had increasingly to acknowledge qualifications, adding them on without sufficiently revising his first assumptions. Since this is a serious criticism, the grounds for it must be explained.

This central pole of contentions is that ethnic sentiments are an extension of the sentiments which underlie

co-operation between kinsfolk, and that these are genetically determined; "since organisms are survival mechanisms for genes, by definition those genes that program organisms for successful reproduction will spread". Nepotism, ethnocentrism and reciprocal altruism are methods by which the selfish gene ensures its expansion. On this foundation a larger structure is built up. Natural selection operates in favour of the characters which are most efficient in particular environments, while humans have developed a socio-cultural mode of evolution which selects and transmits favoured characters more efficiently than the biological mode.

Though human societies have this additional aspect, their culture is still part of nature and, like other animal societies, human groups are held together by the self-interest of their individual members. This self-interest, we are told, is best measured in terms of reproductive success, for it is through differential reproduction that evolution proceeds. Individuals interact competitively or co-operatively to maximize their individual fitness. They do so in three basic ways: through kin selection, reciprocity and coercion. Kin selection occurs because nepotistic behaviour favours the replication of the genes of the nepotist, so it is a directly genetic process. Reciprocity, however, is described as the giving and receiving of favours without any claim that this can be reduced, without remainder, to a genetic explanation. In apparent contradiction to this, coercion is described as a matter of biology. It is said to arise when one group of people uses force or the threat of force to enhance the fitness of its members at the expense of another group, and to result in intra-specific parasitism. Von den Berghe looks with respect upon attempts to explain ethnic conflict as class conflict but seeks to subsume them under his own argument which he claims to be generally compatible with Marxist class analysis. Social classes, he says, are linked in the unequal relationship of parasite and host.

Such contentions appear unequivocally reductionist, so it is necessary to pause over the author's assertion that "human behaviour must be analyzed at three distinct but inter-

related levels: genetic, ecological and cultural". In what respects are these levels distinct? What constitutes an analysis, and does it differ from an explanation? These questions are answered only indirectly by a series of chapters on colonialism, slavery, middlemen minorities, caste, and consociationalism, which elaborate on the view that most aspects of human behaviour are several steps removed from their genetic underpinnings. The reader is not told in what way an ecological analysis is distinct. Instead - and this seems to be the essence of the cultural analysis - it is said that there are two main trends predicting co-operation or conflict. One is the closeness of the biological relation, the other is the cost-benefit ratio in a transaction. Under some circumstances it pays to seize resources at the expense even of close kin. So on to his sociobiology von den Berghe adds an individual ethnic model which is intended to explain the way people consciously manipulate ethnic boundaries to their own advantage. They decide to assimilate to other groups, or to resist assimilation by them, as if they were consciously seeking to maximize benefits and minimize costs. This does not sound reductionist, yet on the next page we are told that in the last analysis competition over resources is ultimately converted into reproductive success.

An approach which analysed human behaviour at the cultural level as distinct from the biological might accept that, like plants and animals, humans compete by seizing territory and excluding potential rivals, while insisting that most human competition is conducted according to rules for which there are no analogues in the plant and animal kingdoms. At the extreme, humans recognize laws of warfare whether or not they always observe them in practice. There are also sporadic incidents of genocide, but even these have usually to be justified on the grounds that those being slain are not truly human. Such moral rules put the brakes on any reproductive struggle and they can be said to serve a function within socio-cultural evolution. Moreover, some very sophisticated theories have been developed about the way human behaviour is related to rules, and about the kinds

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of rules which (eg. by regulating markets) will minimize the general benefit. Reciprocity is a key element in market behaviour and coercion is often employed either to distort or to protect patterns of reciprocity. To maintain that it all boils down to differential reproduction is not to state a theory but to advance a philosophy of history (which is the major respect in which van den Berghe's sociology resembles Marxism).

Nor is it true to the spirit of Charles Darwin, for Darwin, after having written out a sketch of his theory of natural selection, devoted eight years to an examination of sexuality in barnacles as the most expeditious way of subjecting his ideas to an empirical test. Van den Berghe asserts that the genetic basis of the propensity to favour kin is clearly shown by the ease with which parental feelings take precedence over racial feeling in cases of racial admixture. It should not be difficult to compare the strength of feelings expressed by their children by natural parents, adoptive parents and foster parents, but has it been done? When someone has identified the sociological equivalent of those hormones end conducted tests that produce positive results we shall be in a better position to consider such claims.

Much of what we know about ethnicity remains untouched by van den Berghe's theses. Its historical dimension is set out in Smith's book. For him the "new" ethnicity started not in the 1960s but in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with the beginnings of romanticism. Cultural and political movements interacted. On the one hand, the eighteenth-century flowering of secular thought introduced a sense of historical relativity; it strengthened the tendency to favour vernacular languages (at the expense of Latin) and to make them the basis for national education systems. European nationalism was rewarded by the creation of nation-states. The increasing acceptance that this was only legitimate mode of rule then further stimulated ethnic settlement. So, on the other hand, the existence of national structures led in some countries to attempts to work up nationalist feeling to make them secure. Peasants and workers had to be taught that they were Indians, Tanzanians or Hungarians if they did not know it. Men were persuaded that they shared a national interest for which they should toil, while women were exhorted to bear children for the nation's well-being and strength. Instead of the sentiment creating the social form, the form inspired the sentiment.

According to Walker Connor, since 1789, the dogma that "alien rule is illegitimate rule" has been

inflicting ethnically aware peoples in an ever-broadening pattern, so that Europe's subsequent history has been largely a tale of national liberation movements. Since infection is not a good sociological metaphor, Smith offers an explanation in terms of the rationalization of the modes of government leading to the appearance of what he calls the "scientific state". In such a state the bureaucracies are pervaded by scientific and technical expertise and the personnel have been expert because they have been responsible for an over-production of intellectuals; those who have been unable to obtain positions commensurate with their self-esteem have been radicalized and have created ethnic consciousness so as to put pressure on the state.

At the heart of Smith's sophisticated and highly generalized interpretations stand these intellectuals, with their revolutionary vision of a new community in which the political boundaries will coincide with the ethnic boundaries. They have sought to impose this vision upon the great majority of the population, but, since they have been only partially successful, there remains a deep-seated conflict between the scientific state and a kaleidoscope of competing culture communities.

Is this not a strange doctrine to come from a sociologist teaching in contemporary London? Does not the demographic pattern in cities throughout the industrial world show that people are ready to forsake their cultural communities in pursuit of a higher standard of living? Does not recent history suggest that even the "scientific" state is far from expert at controlling market forces? There is plenty of evidence which supports the nineteenth-century liberal expectation of a dissolution of ethnicity, as well as evidence against it. Those who held that ethnic and national bonds would soon be transcended got the time-scale badly wrong; they underestimated the unevenness of economic growth both within and between nations, and failed to predict its many social consequences; but they correctly identified the main social determinants. In the 1991 Census we have to specify the ethnic group to which we belong, this will prove little about the strength of any genuinely ethnic sentiment. All it will demonstrate is that the government wishes to make market processes operate more freely by reducing the incidence of discrimination. It is being impelled to do so by the realization that inaction would be even more expensive. The ethnic group has become a new social form in British society also.

In pursuit of the perfect

By Quentin Skinner

J. C. DAVIS:

Utopia and the Ideal Society
A study of English utopian writing
427pp. Cambridge University Press.
£25.
0 521 23396 8

J. C. Davis begins his survey of utopian writing in early-modern England with a chapter entitled "In search of a definition". To write a utopia, he tells us, is only one of several ways of visualizing an ideal society. There are four other "available modes". They are "millennium, arcadia, cockayne and perfect moral commonwealth". Dr Davis accordingly takes it to be his first task to distinguish the utopian "mode" from these other approaches to "social idealisation".

The analysis he proceeds to offer is not altogether lucid, in spite of being markedly repetitious. But it seems to be saying that four criteria serve to mark it to be his first task to distinguish the utopian "mode" from these other approaches to "social idealisation". The analysis he proceeds to offer is not altogether lucid, in spite of being markedly repetitious. But it seems to be saying that four criteria serve to mark it to be his first task to distinguish the utopian "mode" from these other approaches to "social idealisation".

This definition soon gets Davis into difficulties. He starts with More's *Utopia*, which certainly meets his required criteria well enough. But so does a work like Starkey's *Dialogue*, as well as a number of other humanist treatises produced by More's contemporaries, none of which is mentioned in Davis's account. More seriously, his contention that utopian theorists are especially concerned with the de-legalization of social and governmental institutions seems to be contradicted by a number of his

own chosen examples. He claims Eberlein's *Wolffaria* (1521) as a utopia, while conceding that it has "little to say about government". He describes *Antiquity Reviv'd* (1693) as a utopian tract, while pointing out that its constitutional structure is "nebulous" and its proposed institutions "at best rudimentary". He devotes a whole chapter to Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), only to announce half-way through that its lack of "an institutional and bureaucratic apparatus" means that it cannot "be labelled utopian in the sense already elaborated". And he prefaces a lengthy paraphrase of Chamberlain's *Poore Mans Advocate* (1649) with the admission that it is "perhaps not strictly a utopia", since it is neither about "a total community" nor about "a perfected society".

After these initial attempts at definition, Davis settles down for the rest of his book to discuss a number of individual texts which more or less fulfil his conditions for being utopias. His approach to this remarkably heterogeneous body of materials is, as he says himself, an old-fashioned one. His book is indeed an instance of an almost endangered species of intellectual history. Each chapter begins by introducing us to the author of some particular utopian work, and then goes on to supply us with a brief biography of the writer, a summary of the text itself and a number of critical reflections on its value and interest. We are then ready to move on to the next utopian theorist on Davis's chronological list. Beginning in 1516 with the publication of More's *Utopia*, he continues in this vein until he reaches the end of the seventeenth century, at which point a more general chapter is appended on "the full-employment utopia" and the discussion is then broken off rather suddenly (and for no very evident reason) at the year 1700.

The individual studies presented in these chapters are of very unequal quality. The opening survey of More's celebrated work is disappointing, since it has little to offer beyond a reading of the text itself. It is weakened, moreover, by its failure to come to terms with – or even to mention – the arguments put forward by Chambers, Sirtz, Fenlon and other scholars who have doubted whether More really intended his *Utopia* as a picture of a perfect society after all.

The next chapter is also somewhat unsatisfactory. This is entitled "The European experience, 1521-1619", and analyses two German utopias (those of Eberlein and Andreae) and

two Italian ones (by Doni and Campanella). It is not clear why these are included in a book bearing the sub-title "A study of English utopian writing", except that Doni and Campanella were both directly influenced by More. Nor can this chapter be said to lead to great scholarly value, if only because Davis gives no evidence that he has read three out of his four chosen texts. He quotes directly and at length from Doni, Eberlein and Campanella all appear to be taken from secondary sources, and his treatment of these writers is somewhat thin and generalized.

As soon as we reach the seventeenth century, however, the discussion improves very greatly in quality. There is an interesting analysis of the utopian section in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and of the numerous and contrasting utopias produced in the course of the English revolution. Davis turns first to Samuel Gott's *Novum Solym* (1648) and provides a careful commentary on its account of the relations between true religion and perfect happiness. This is followed by an excellent chapter on Gerard Winstanley, the leading pamphleteer of the Digger movement, whose evolution from a millenarian to a utopian brand of radicalism is perceptively traced. Finally, there is an ambitious chapter on James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), which contrives to say something new and challenging about that much-discussed work by insisting on its utopian as well as classical republican character.

This sequence of chapters represents a notable contribution to existing discussions about the radical social theories of the English revolution. Dr Davis exhibits a comprehensive grasp of the voluminous literature on the subject, and in each case has a forceful point of his own to add. Although his book takes a long time to get into its stride, readers with the patience to wait for this to happen will eventually find themselves well rewarded.

The Future of the Sociological Classics edited by Buford Rheas (212pp. Allen and Unwin, £4.95, 0 04 30111 3) contains nine essays by leading sociologists on the relevance and possible application of sociological classics today; included in it are chapters by Dennis H. Wrong on Max Weber, Irving M. Zeldin on Karl Marx and a posthumously published paper by Talcott Parsons entitled "Revisiting the Classics".

FOLKLORE

Visitations from the invisible

By Graham Hough

H. R. E. DAVIDSON and W. M. S. RUSSELL (Editors):
The Folklore of Ghosts
217pp. D. S. Brewer (for the Folklore Society), £12.
0 8591 079 2

When the well-adjusted intellectual leaves his ivory tower to mingle with the British people he finds two subjects of conversation that are both safe and inexhaustible – compost and ghosts. Compost we may leave aside at this season of the year; but here is an excellent book on ghosts which will do much to enrich the common stock. *Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate*. But are ghosts to be counted among the visible or the invisible Natures? The point about ghosts is that, normally invisible, they become visible on occasion; and apart from mere gapping wonderment most discourse about them is an enquiry into what causes them to appear, to what laws they are obedient. *Sed horum antiquum familiam quis nobis enarrabit?* Who will describe to us their varieties, classes and several accomplishments? Well, I will make a start. There are basically two kinds of ghosts: Psychological Research Society ghosts, who operate according to very strict rules, and the ghosts of legend and folklore, who are less inhibited. This distinction says nothing about what ghosts are beyond the fact that they appear; another degree of scepticism can doubt that some people see things that they describe as ghosts; we can dispute the name and nature of these visibilia, but not the fact that they are seen.

The two classes I have mentioned are tolerably distinct. Ghosts recognized by the Society for Psychological Research have certain definite characteristics. They most often appear at or about the time of death. Otherwise they are usually fairly recent – not of people who died long ago. They appear in ordinary surroundings, and at first are often thought to be so. They rarely speak and their range of action is very limited, but within that they move about, avoid furniture and intercept light as actual

people would do. They do not dispute objects or have any effect on material things (pottergeists, which do, are a different matter); and when ghosts disappear they may just fade away, or apparently pass through walls or closed doors. Lastly, these qualities and appearances are attested by first-hand accounts from normally reliable people; and what is more, these accounts are in remarkable agreement; the apparitions in them rarely behave otherwise than as described above.

The ghosts of legend and folklore are different. They are frequently bizarre or terrifying – headless horsemen and the like. They appear in places with known associations, often going far back in time – bleeding nuns and wicked lords of former ages. They are more purposeful than the ghosts of recent experience; they utter warnings or threats or come to expiate wrongs done on earth. They may leave visible tokens of their presence, objects disturbed or preternaturally introduced. Above all, the records are not first-hand; the tales passed from mouth to mouth, sometimes for centuries, existing in different versions and subject to considerable embroidery. Or they are avowedly fictional.

There is some overlap between the two, and we can sometimes see what began as the report of an actual experience working itself up into a tale or attaching itself to a local legend. But for the most part they are distinct; the phenomena are different in each case, and give rise to different questions. In the first case the questions are mostly about the authenticity of the experience, the reliability of the report, and the relation of the apparition to the real person it seems to represent. Is what is seen a "spirit", a telepathic phenomenon or a mere hallucination? And is it in any sense caused by the dead or dying human being that it seems to be? With the ghosts of legend and story such questions would be mostly vain; but a different set of questions arise, of almost equal range. What purpose do the stories serve? What is their relation to the society that gives rise to them? To what hopes, fears, resentments and affections do they bear witness? Answer can be no comprehensive answer. Nor can we believe in ghosts. In the *Folklore of Ghosts* an American anthropologist is cited who told the story of *Hamlet* to a tribe in Nigeria. But they found

it incomprehensible, for they were quite certain that the dead never come back, and they believed that widows should remarry immediately, preferably to the husband's brother. In these more numerous societies that do have well-developed ghost legends the motifs are extremely various, ranging from mere unanalysed fright to quite elaborate attempts at moralizing and rationalizing the supernatural. And they can be seen, if we are to look that far, as testifying both to attitudes towards death and the hereafter and to patterns of social relation among the living. The papers collected here, as befits a folklore society, are mainly devoted to matters of this kind.

They are very uneven in value. The papers on West Indian ghosts and on ghost traditions in Ulster rely largely on tape-recordings. They are very interesting and not much is done with them. The West Indian fear of "duppies" has apparently been brought by immigrants to England, where no doubt it contributes to unease in new surroundings. The Ulster material suggests a life after death as boring as the life before it. The elaborate treatment of the seventeenth-century ghost of old Mrs Lesley also seems to lose its way in insignificant detail. Claire Russell makes a brave effort to go beyond the mere recording of traditions, and tries to furnish a psychological explanation of the persistent interest in the ghostly world. She assimilates ghost experiences to dream experiences and sees them as externalized dreams, to be explained by unconscious pressures in the minds of the living; but a theme entailing thought-transference and communal telepathy, as this does, needs to be worked out more fully if it is to be seriously considered.

The best contributions rely on literary sources. The most novel and sparkling, both in material and presentation is Carmen Blacker's on the Angry Ghosts of Japan – beings with a long tradition behind them and, it appears, equally active to-day. Joan Rockwell presents a selection from the immense archive of ghost material collected by the Danish folklorist Evald Tang Kristensen. It is good stuff in itself, and she draws some interesting conclusions from it – notably that the prevalence among the unhappy walking ghosts of tyrannical landlords, unjust bailiffs and cheating land-surveyors suggests

a posthumous revenge by the living on their dead oppressors. The Icelandic ghosts described by H. R. E. Davidson are not spirits, but the walking dead, in corporeal form, who come to harm or terrorize the living. Other instances of this belief are recorded. The three papers on medieval ghost stories (Richard Boyer), ghosts in classical antiquity (W. M. S. Russell), and ghosts in the Old Testament and the ancient Near East (J. R. Pritchard) are all scholarly surveys including much interesting material, some familiar, some less so.

What is most notable is the great variety of motives attributed to ghosts. They come back because their wishes have been neglected,

because they are restless between death and burial, because they are condemned to walk without rest as a punishment for their sins. They may return voluntarily as an act of expiation, or in order to help their relatives, or to take revenge on their enemies – almost any variety of unfinished business may cause a return to earth – generally unwelcome to the living; though a division can be observed between those societies whose ghosts are mostly malevolent and those who see them as benign. The most impressive of all early commentators on ghosts is St Augustine, who combined an open-minded acceptance of the phenomena with a sceptical criticism of the explanations that is up to the highest standards of modern psychical research.



Yomim (Yomim) as depicted in the Theatrein Senittis, a late fourteenth-century illuminated MS in the Casanque Library in Rome, and reproduced in The Medieval Health Handbook, by Luisa Cogliati Arano (154pp. New York: Braziller, distributed in the UK by Zwemmer, £9.50, 0 8076 0808 4). Such guides illustrated and categorized the effects of foods, the weather, the seasons and even emotions on human health.

Organizing the organizers

By Alan Ryan

L. J. HUME:
Bentham and Bureaucracy.
320pp. Cambridge University Press.
£22.50.
0 521 23542 1

Utilitarian political theory is, perhaps, in principle, always awkwardly poised between a defence of democratic institutions and popular participation and a defence of efficient bureaucracy. On the one hand, the promotion of the greatest happiness seems to require above all else a lively, vocal and active population; who constantly remind the rulers of what they want; on the other, the formulation and implementation of policies in the interests of the people seem to require the time and skills of bureaucratic rather than the untutored intervention of the people themselves. When J. S. Mill admitted that some aristocratic governments had not succeeded to this interest, he was quick to add that the defects of aristocracy had always been the defects of bureaucracy. He thought that the East India Company's government of the

sub-continent needed no more defence than pointing to the managerial efficiency of the company. It was neither here nor there that the East India Company was not installed by the Indian people; what mattered was that it looked after their welfare efficiently, and cheaply, and honestly, as no government of their own choosing would have done.

L. J. Hume's account of Bentham's views on bureaucracy starts and ends with the *Constitutional Code*; that is to say, it is the fact that the Code's treatment of the executive is so much more detailed, comprehensive and principled than any other contemporary treatment that starts Dr Hume on the task which occupies the bulk of his book: the exploration of how Bentham's interest in the executive developed, and how far he went beyond his predecessors in his treatment of it. It is essentially an essay in the history of ideas, and it will be of greater interest to historians than to political philosophers or sociological theorists. All the same, Hume is at some pains to make the reader see that the achievement he is describing is both remarkable in itself and understated in the run-of-the-mill literature on the history of organization theory and associated disciplines.

The standard history of organization theory starts in the first twenty

or thirty years of this century. Henri Fayol's treatise on *General and Industrial Management* of 1911 began the science and art of rational management, and emphasizes the degree to which its principles apply to government and industry alike. But, says Hume, many of Fayol's fourteen principles of management "reproduce almost exactly" Bentham's thoughts in almost his own words. It is true that only Bentham could have coined the terminology to describe the "rationalization-suggestive" function of proposing improvements in "persons, things, money, instruments of statistization, registration and publication" etc; but the need to attend to forward planning and organization is recognizable enough. Of nineteenth-century writers, Charles Babbage generally gets some credit for anticipating the work of the organization theorist; but he is less novel, and less systematic than Bentham was before him.

Bentham is, however, cranky and unphilosophical; he identified all organization with bureaucratic organization, stuck to rigidly hierarchical principles of organization and control, and never considered that a functionally equivalent but different context. But this is hardly to be wondered at; not merely was he not Max Weber, he was also a determined opponent of the particular

abuses of governmental authority which were to be found in the Britain of his day. He was impelled by the need to remedy these abuses, not by a large curiosity about how different societies could conduct their affairs in such a variety of ways.

A particular achievement of Hume's account of all this is the summary he provides of the materials with which Bentham could begin. According to him, the twin pre-occupations of individualism and the eighteenth-century theory of the modern state yield something like a Benthamite research programme into the most efficient way of administering a modern society. The thought that individuals were not naturally or habitually bound to intermeddled associations, but could be directly acted on by governments; the idea that legislative authority was the first attribute of sovereignty; the consequent pressure to make law simple, clear and comprehensive; all emerge long before Bentham and all prepare the ground for him. What Bentham brought to the materials he had available was a passion for good order and comprehensive forms of classification; in a sense, he also brought the utilitarian calculus to bear for the first time – previous writers had been concerned that governments should promote the good health of the public, but it was

Bentham's obsession with accurate classification that turned a commonsensical concern with the general welfare into a matter for the "fierce calculus".

Thereafter, Hume is concerned to follow Bentham through the various twists and turns of his thinking between the 1780s and the 1820s. No single general change of interest or direction emerges; one might observe that there is something of a movement from issues of a purely jurisprudential sort to more extrajudicial political and administrative matters, but in many ways the story begins and ends with the ambition to produce a comprehensive code, the intervening years having taught Bentham that law neither administered nor makes itself, nor does so by reference to the public-interest without elaborate precautions to make it do so. Hume brings out rather well Bentham's less than wholehearted commitment to anything like *laissez-faire*, and writes sympathetically of his concern with the minutest details of administration; what others might see as ambivalence or mere obsessiveness, Dr Hume presents, and usually persuasively, as the work of a mind prepared to follow arguments to their conclusions. It is this quality, he thinks, which picks Bentham out from his contemporaries and makes him the first modern writer of bureaucracy.

Sykenesse and sympathy

By T. A. Shippey

BERYL ROWLAND (Editor):
Medieval Woman's Guide to Health
The First English Gynecological Handbook
192pp. Croom Helm, £10.95.
0 7059 2216 7

Why should yervain be an antidote for erections? Why should anyone think that "to moche flowing of blode" could be cured in women by taking a fat sot, turning it alive on coals, and straddling the smoke? These are only two of several thousand questions raised by the treatise edited here by Beryl Rowland; and unprofitable though the sheer quantity of them, together with their easy availability in facsimile translation, ought to prove a lure to all students of *perseus savagae*. What could yervain be taken to symbolize? Did eels in medieval Europe occupy some similar niche in folk-taxonomy to that of pangloss among the Lapps (see Mary Douglas) or pigs among Old Testament Jews (see Edmund Leach)?

This "English Trotula" or "Guide to Health" is furthermore provocative under present circumstances in being about, far, and quite possibly by women. This is why, writes Professor Russell Hope Robbins in a preface, he has urged Beryl Rowland to produce her edition straight away instead of looking for more than the twenty or so manuscripts she has

already been able to find. Not only should the work appeal, in his opinion, to students of medicine, social history and theology – he leaves anthropology aside – it also makes a point about the history of women, and of discrimination; it proves "that English women of the late Middle Ages could express their female separateness and their own consciousness".

Warning bells of anachronism and wishful thinking immediately begin to clang, and out without reason. Professor Rowland's introduction to her treatise is impressively learned and remarkably interesting, but it does on occasion show signs of wanting to make simply contemporary points. Women are just as good as men, and societies which recognize this profit from it; so we have claims for the existence of respectable female medical practitioners in early times. Women are just as good as men, and have been kept down by discrimination; so cases of prejudice against women of the late Middle Ages also recorded. Both these are no doubt true, but on occasion the proofs of respectability and of suppression seem to overlap. If "in ancient Greece and Rome" women could practice medicine "on equal terms with men", I do not see why the lady Agnodice should have had to disguise herself to go to lectures, nor why it was such a shock when she raised her tunic "to show her feminity".

The position of female doctors (or healers, or midwives) was no doubt uglier, more complicated and more tightly controlled by convention than

we can immediately imagine. And one major advantage of this edition is that it enables us to see some of the details, both theoretical and practical. Woman clearly had a monopoly of many jobs in medieval Europe. As Rowland notes, Guy de Chauliac simply writes off childbirth: "because the matter requires the attention of women, there is no point in giving much consideration to it". If any manipulation had to be done, it was the midwife who had to do it, and she presumably learnt not from books but from other midwives and from experience.

The treatise edited here is a codification of that valuable, unrecorded underworld of knowledge? There are some features that make one think so: for instance the very lack of neatness in the discussion of premenstrual and how to deal with them, in which a list of potentially dangerous obstetrical positions is interrupted ("the fourth mode of unnatural childbirth") by a note on the use of high beds or birth stools, as if it has just come to the author's mind. Along with that goes a very evident sympathy with women, from the opening – which says that the treatise is written so that "non woman; may helpe another in her sykenesse" – to the remark that although intercourse is painful for some women "some tyme they be constrained to suffice wyl they nyll".

Nevertheless, for all that and for all the "authenticating" remarks about women in London, and in Bermondsey, and in Essex, and on "Lightfoot the garden", I

do not think that this book is in fact what everyone would like to see, a raw collection of primary data. Too much of it (nearly all of it) seems to betray a wish to impress by complexity, to show off learning at some remove from the subject rather than simply to alleviate pain; it would follow that the author was a man, not indeed the kind of man who coined the term "Trotula" for a lady doctor – a "trot" is indifferently a bawd, midwife, gadabout or drab – but still somebody wanting to help rather than knowing how to. And the most immediate utility of this treatise, it seems to me, is as yet one more document in the history of prejudice, prejudice which furthermore appears at times too vile for Beryl Rowland to want to bandole.

Thus the first paragraph of her "Guide" states, indeed, that its purpose is to tell women help each other. But the reason they need to help each other is that, in the world of this book, if a woman says she is sick she is very likely to be despised, especially by men, and especially by those men who desire women only for their lusts and har foul ykyng ("her" in this dialect meaning, incidentally, "their"). A woman can be desired one minute and despised the next; sex is a disease; in women it is dirty; above all, women are polluting, morally, physically and ritually. Such beliefs are fully admitted by the text. "Guide to Health" seems but in fact very far away. Awareness of them may explain the author's preoccupation with menstruation, corrupt humours, diseases of the uterus, and

the female "seed" which, if left unfertilized by the male, may lead to ghastly births of lifeless fleshy lumps. To this, useful consideration of childbirth is distinctly secondary.

A final point, made indeed by Beryl Rowland, is that the belief-system underlying the fifteenth-century text survived into the twentieth century in at least one tangible form, namely the amending-bottles that once adorned every genteel nursery. The practice of young ladies sniffing them seems to go back to old belief that "the vapours" come from the womb, but that the womb will return to its proper place if attracted or repelled by sweet or pungent odours. Other beliefs may have survived longer, if more unmentionably.

So many people long for and longer, a collection of philological essays in Scots and medieval English, was proposed to Angus McIntosh on the occasion of his retirement from the Forbes Chair of English Language at the University of Edinburgh. The sections are "Language and History", "Onomastics", "Texts", "Style" and the volume includes essays by A. J. Aitken on "Angus McIntosh and Scottish Studies" and by Michael Benskin on "The Middle English Dialect Atlas". Texts discussed include *Hamlet*, the *Auchinleck*, the *Piers Plowman*, the *York Chaucer's* play, *Scott's Medical Book*. Edited by Michael Benskin and M. L. Samuels and privately published, it is available from Middle English Dialect Project, 2 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LW at £6.95 + £1 p.p.

and Shakespearean practice runs through the criticism of the period. Pope is typical: while praising Rymer as "on the whole, one of the best critics we ever had," he can yet allow that "To judge *Shakespeare* by *Aristotle's* rule is like trying a man by the Laws of one Country who acted under those of another." Long before the century was out, the English public had rendered up its foregone verdict. "With us *Shakespeare* is a kind of established religion," wrote Arthur Murphy in 1753, "admonished the most formidable anti-Shakespearean of the Enlightenment, Voltaire himself."

An established church requires an authorized version of Holy Writ. The apostolic succession of eighteenth-century editors, from Rowe in 1709 to Steevens and others in 1793, packaged and re-packaged Shakespeare for evolving tastes, and consolidated and amplified knowledge. Simultaneously, buildings and gentry appealed to express editorial sensibility. Shakespearean drama reminds Pope of "an ancient majestic piece of Gothic Architecture compared with a neat Modern building. . . . It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler ornaments; tho' we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages." In *Shakespeare*, for Theobald, "as in great Piles of Building . . . some Parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprize with the vast Design and Execution of the Architect; others are contracted, to amuse you with his Neatness and Elegance in little." To Johnson, Shakespeare was a forest rather than a formal garden; "oaks extend their branches and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses."

While uniminted by established reputations, Vickers has his own unconventional editorial heroes. Charles Jennens, for example, who

truly appreciated the importance of textual collation and exactness, and correctly took the measure of that unconscionable intimidator Steevens. Historians (myself included) have too often failed to take Jennens seriously enough, although anybody who undertakes to publish a book anonymously and embellishes it with a fulsomely appreciative dedication to himself invites mishap.

Theobald presents a weightier case. He was singularly unfortunate in both his friendships and his enmities. In *Shakespeare Restored* (here generously excerpted) he gave a *Specimen of the Many Errors, As well Committed, as Uncommitted, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of his Poet*. Pope vented his understandable fury by making Theobald the hero of the first *Dunciad*, yet at the same time didn't hesitate to avail himself of many of Theobald's readings when a new edition of his own *Shakespeare* was called for. Theobald's relations with another fellow Shakespearean editor, the terrible William Warburton, were psychologically more complex. Theobald deferred absolutely to Warburton, in every way his inferior, and in correspondence declared gratitude for fellowship he took to be "the offspring of a truly generous mind." But Warburton's mind knew no generosity, nor did Christian charity lurk in the bosom of the divine who would be elevated to the seat of Gloucester. His emendations, offered with breathtaking arrogance and dogmatism, made him the laughing-stock of the cognoscenti.

Theobald is best appreciated for such happy readings as "a babble [Folio: 'a Table'] of green fields" in *Henry V*, and Macbeth's "bank and shoof [Folio: 'Schools'] of time"; but he played a grander role than these would suggest. Vickers, surely correctly, sees Theobald as a pioneering theoretician and practitioner of "total editing." His gifts did not go unrecognized in his own day, but

they were not sufficiently recognized, and he had the further misfortune of suffering Johnson's terrible, and empty dissemination, censure as "a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions"; ignorant, faithless, and petulant. In the *Critical Heritage* the process of rehabilitation, already well under way, proceeds apace.

Edward Capell, the last of Vickers's heroes, is the one that in the end he has come most to admire. His combination of intelligence, good sense, enormous range of learning, minute accuracy, scrupulousness of detail, and the ability to visualize a text in theatrical terms, a grasp of its totality which is rare in any age and was unique in his own. High praise indeed, from a critic not given to superlatives, and justified by the selections. Also a judgment not easily arrived at, for Capell, like Theobald - but in a different way - was his own worst enemy. An enthusiast of typographical excellence, he refused to disfigure his pages with notes, and so reserved them for separate publication, with other ancillary materials, in the over 1,800 mostly double-column pages of his *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, which I have found, I dare say like others, a nightmare to consult. Capell's ungainly prose style also didn't help matters. "If he had come to me," Johnson confided in Boswell, "I would have endeavored to endow his purposes with words; for, as it is, he doth gabble monstrosity." Yet Capell gave of himself prodigiously to his life's work; report holds that he transcribed all of Shakespeare ten times over. At last, in our time, recognition has belatedly come, first, twenty years ago, in an essay by Alice Walker hailing Capell as "a neglected Shakespearean," to whom indeed we owe the very word "Shakespearean." Eastman, to be sure, fails to mention Capell, but now that he has been promoted by Vickers to general, and

decorated for valour in the field, awareness of his achievement should be quickly spreading to a large, non-specialist audience.

Vickers includes a good sampling from Capell, and for the others, from Pope onwards, he supplements the editor's introduction with some of the notes, which are in places more provocative and informative (besides being more difficult of access) than the introductions themselves. Picking and choosing must have been a prodigious task. Vickers himself lightly annotates his own texts; too lightly maybe: not over one can be counted on to know that Sir Paul Pliant (cited by Aaron Hill here) is a character in Congreve's *The Double Dealer*. But Vickers is a suspect, merely deferring to *Critical Heritage* policy in such matters. He translates Latin quotations, and - an especially welcome feature - cites their precise origins. (No identifications are offered of the Shakespearean portraits on the jackets. This is a pity - few readers will, I imagine, know that the one for Volume 3, for example, reproduces the handsome Janssen likeness that now hangs at the Folger.) My spot-checks of the texts themselves confirm Vickers's praiseworthy scrupulousity. His bead- notes to the 309 selections are concisely informative.

In his six general introductions he is never merely perfunctory, nor does he patronize the uninitiated reader, who may sometimes feel he has been given more than he bargained for. Vickers's last introduction runs to almost ninety pages, including twenty of documentation. Like everybody else, Vickers makes mistakes, which he hastens to correct. Thus, he concludes Volume 4 with a notice, from the *Critical Review* (1765), which he confidently entitles, "George Steevens on restoring Shakespeare's text." It is always dangerous to ascribe ophthalmic jour-

nalistic pieces on the basis of style, and here Vickers comes a cropper; in the next volume he correctly attributes the item to William Gifford. No edifice of critical speculation collapses and has to be rebuilt as a result, but such details have their own interest - say, for the biographer of Steevens. That great and harmful eccentric deserves a biography.

A measure of the success of an anthology of any kind is its capacity to tease one into looking beyond its covers. That happened to me more than once - for example, when I encountered Charlotte Lennox in Sir Paul Pliant (cited by Aaron Hill here) is a character in Congreve's *The Double Dealer*. But Vickers is a suspect, merely deferring to *Critical Heritage* policy in such matters. He translates Latin quotations, and - an especially welcome feature - cites their precise origins. (No identifications are offered of the Shakespearean portraits on the jackets. This is a pity - few readers will, I imagine, know that the one for Volume 3, for example, reproduces the handsome Janssen likeness that now hangs at the Folger.) My spot-checks of the texts themselves confirm Vickers's praiseworthy scrupulousity. His bead- notes to the 309 selections are concisely informative.

Vickers leaves his readers with as impressive addition to the Shakespeare shelf. Hardly anyone, I expect, will read these volumes through seriatim, but they will be frequently consulted for edification and sometimes even entertainment.

Coming to terms with the Eye

By Alan Coren

HELEN THURBER and EDWARD WEEKS (Editors):
Selected Letters of James Thurber
274pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
0 241 10706 7

Even under normal posthumous circumstances, writers' widows are the last people who should be let loose on the dusty shoe-boxes, the escritoire pigeon-holes, the heaving letter columns of literary weeklies: the wife of her deceased husband's correspondence has not one, but two, reputations to protect, if not, indeed, enhance. But in the case of James Thurber, this double-indemnity embraces a particular threat to candour.

Thurber was a man who spent much of his grating life in the pocket-marked redoubt of the marital front-line, sending back his withering dispatches from the Million Years War, the Ernie Pyle of the sexual barrage and the nuptial raid. Yet there is not one word among the 80,000 gumbled together here to suggest that he enjoyed anything but snug serenity beneath the monogamous counterpane. The man that Thurber must have been, if we base our reasonable assumptions upon the writer that he unquestionably was, is simply not here. Did he never write privately, to anyone, about lust or love or marriage or extra-marriage, to confide, or complain, or rejoice, or even merely to tell?

The question does not proceed from irrelevant prurience, but from honest literary curiosity: for Thurber's published writings across thirty years take the disordered relationships of men and women (or, as he would put it, men versus women) as a constant theme. And what are a writer's letters for, if not for the elucidation of the printed stuff? Particularly since the humorist's trade is so often the refraction of experience, the fabrication of an alternative reality from material whose raw state he has used his best endeavours to conceal. Does the devoted reader of Thurber not yearn for a detective hour or two spent linoing through *The Unselected Letters*?

Though there would, inevitably, be less there than one would find among the unpublished detritus of other writers. The best collections of letters have always been those which have contained the sort of writing that the author was unable to write elsewhere: for the novelist, the dramatist, the poet, for anyone committed to a relatively exclusive form, there will always be piles of unusable reflections and the words to clothe them lying in the chambers of the brain, best fit for the personal output of diaries and letters. These stock-piles are rarely available to the humorous journalist; they have all been pressed into professional and commercial service. His personal life is his public product, suitably distorted by the comic tinkering which is his art: everything, every random, disconnected thought, every idiosyncratic obsession, every accident or encounter, or half-remembered eavesdropping, is instant grist. It may make only a couple of hundred words but, clearly typed and snappily titled, it will do; an editor will help it pay the author's gas bill. No humorist in his right mind would waste it on an uncommissioned letter. Indeed, taking the obverse, essential Thurber, high Thurber, *Thurber* Thurber - *The Night the Bed Fell*, *The Day the Dam Broke*, *The Dog That Bit People*, say - what are they but personal letters from him to you, limning the minutiae of his life, but published by *The New Yorker*, simply because that's the way he chose to address the envelope? Indeed, it might be pushing it too far to say that Thurber's letters have already appeared in print, selected by himself.

Certainly, what Helen Thurber and Edward Weeks have gathered together would not, I think, have passed Thurber's obsessively rigorous criteria, nor received Harold Ross's imprimatur. They are dull dogs, almost all, too much concerned with

the sort of day-to-day trivia of interest only to the recipients, the keeping-abreast, the private jokes, the inquiries into mutual friends, the evocation of mutual memories. The writing itself, casual to the point of sloppiness, is utterly uncharacteristic of so self-punishingly meticulous a prose-maker, and the laughs are very few indeed. If these were the first words of Thurber to fall into a browser's hand, I doubt that he would find an irresistible need to fork out folding money for the dozen or so unique and hilariously brilliant books of Thurber's writing prime. Nor does it seem to me, setting aside the quality of the expression, to be much use as a companion volume: it will, surely, be bought only by those who already have a considerable knowledge and love of Thurber's humour, many of whom will also (at least, I hope) have read Burton Bernstein's excellent 1975 biography, and I can not for the life of me see how their reading of the works or their understanding of the man will be enriched by these disappointing shards of correspondence.

Except where the Eye is concerned. The agony of the eye was something that Thurber could manufacture scant comedy (although there was one wonderful exception, *The Admiral on the Wheel*, written in the years before the whole terror hit), and thus, commercially unpayable, it occupies a frequent and prominent position in his letters. The Eye, in fact, hovers over this book like a masonic emblem; at times, the book itself feels like a biography of the Eye.

Not the left eye, dead before our story begins, shot out (or, more accurately, in) during one of those childhood games in which one child pretends to be William Tell Jr. and the other pretends to know what he's doing with a bow and arrow; but the right eye. For forty years, the right eye had to make its way in the world alone; it was a tenacious and a courageous way, but that its long struggle was, quite literally, unequal. In 1900, ophthalmology was a halting and an erratic trade: it was some thirty years before the scientific of optic sympathy was scientifically appreciated and none suffered from this ignorance more than Thurber. The Eye struggled to do the work both of itself and of its absent mate; which doomed it. From the moment that the arrow struck, the writing was on the wall for the bereft Eye, and fading fast. It finally failed in 1947, when its host was fifty-two, leaving him fourteen further years of, now pitch, darkness.

I anthropomorphize this Eye. I give it a separate identity, only because Thurber insists upon doing so himself. He saw it as slightly apart from him, with its own personality; its own destiny, indeed its own health; the Eye's life affected his, but it belonged more to the Eye than he did to him. He observed it from within, like a compassionate, cooed and frequently irritated friend, knowing that it would one day let him down and leave him to struggle inadequately on, alone.

In 1939, after six operations, he wrote thus to the eye-surgeon, now his friend, Dr. Gordon Bruce, who had during the 1930s belatedly attempted to save Thurber's sight: "The old eye is the same as ever for distance but I'll be goddam if I can read - except - and this is funny - under a big umbrella outdoors in a bright sun; under these conditions, I see to read even newspaper type exactly as well without my glasses as with my distance ones. If I use my right lens as a magnifying glass and pull it away, I can see as clearly for a fifth of a second, as I did in 1896. I can also do a lot of other tricks, but I am getting crosser and snappier and sadder every minute, straining and struggling to type and to read and to draw (the latter is the easiest). I'd rather atrophy those muscles in two years than, by God, go through life like a blindfolded man looking for a black sock or a black carpet. If I use the old distance lenses and

only have stronger ones for reading, wouldn't that even up the atrophy problem? Couldn't I go without glasses when not reading, or something? Life is no good to me at all unless I can read, type, and draw. I would sell out for 13 cents.

Nobody, fortunately, came up with the money. Or if they did, Thurber had by then changed the deal. It had been made during one of his lower lows (there were many), and in fact one cannot resist the guess that, had he tried to kill himself, the likelihood is that his natural inaptitude with inanimate objects would not only have saved him, it would have ended up nourishing his pen. We know, that he never made the attempt because there is no article entitled "The Night the Noose Broke."

There was an alternative method (apart from booze, which went, and

in vast intakes, without saving) of coming to terms with the Eye, of coping with the foul irony whereby the living tool that had enabled him to express his genius now threatened to make that expression impossible: eleven years later than the thirteenth offer, and by now three years totally blind, Thurber wrote to his old Columbus friend Joel Sayre:

The maddest I get is at people who avoid discussing my eye on the ridiculous ground that it would embarrass me. There is too much talk about the courage or nobility of the afflicted, since I know damn well that the challenge is far greater than the handicap. Remember, I am a looker on the average page of a newspaper, and I am a movie star in a movie short wrapping bundles with my feet, and having

more fun than you and I have with our hands. Furthermore, I have been spared the sight of television.

We cannot, obviously, evaluate that challenge; all we can do is evaluate the product of the challenged years, and there is no question but that there is more of the good and the true and the unquestionably Thurbian in the writing of the last two, dark, decades than in the brighter two that preceded them. That I have taken away with me from this dislocated cobbler of his letters is the reminder of the hell of his blindness. I should probably find deeply distressing, if that reminder did not also serve to astound me with the magnitude of the tragedy which Thurber overcame in order to produce the dazzling magnitude of his comedy. The example charges up the spirit, and humiliates one's own cheap grievances.

Courtly diversions

By Douglas Dunn

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD:
Poems 1911-1940
189pp. Broomfield Books, 1700
Long Pine, Bloomfield Hills, Michi-
gan 48013. \$11.95.
\$13 642 8897

Other than memories of the poems written by Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise* - Eleanor's poem to Amory, or the poems scribbled to other characters in Scott Fitzgerald's first novel - few readers will have much knowledge of Fitzgerald as a poet. Biographers dwell affectionately on his contributions to the musical plays performed by Princeton's Triangle Club; but the impressionist *Triangle Club*, by Arthur Mizener in *The Far Side of Paradise*, is one merely of approval of a brilliant youth's precocity.

None had such promise then, and none your scapegoat yet or your disarming grace; Conceived like Perseus in a dream of gold.

For you were bold as was Danae's son, Conceived like Perseus in a dream of gold. Thus John Peale Bishop, the original of Thomas D'Inverniers, Amory Blaine's classmate whose name appears beneath the dedicatory poem to *The Great Gatsby*. Bishop's lines suggest praise for the novelist as aesthete rather than for the novelist as poet. But that is nothing remarkable: many prose-writers begin as university poets, and their contemporaries have an understandable fondness for those heady years of long, enthusiastic conversations and intimately confessed ambitions.

Towards the end of 1939, Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter: "Sometimes I wish I had gone along with that gang [Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart], but I guess I am too much of a moralist at heart and really want to preach at people in some acceptable form rather than to entertain them."

The lyrics he wrote for *The Triangle Club's* shows certainly demonstrate a youthful facility with the language of show business. They are apted with the worldly wit of a bright undergraduate. For example, a song called "Love or Eugenics", from the show *Flie! Flie! Horst!* (the original, clearly, of *How to Succeed in This Side of Paradise*):

My figure disagrees no flimsy poses No curves to soft and fair. No fashionable butts, but plenty of muscle.

And avoid dupes to spare. And, as Amory Blaine would have said, so on and so forth, as a wittily contrasting dialogue unfolds between the two girls of opposite types. By the following Christmas, Fitzgerald was writing lyrics for *The Evil Eye* - one of the songs was called "We Got My Eyes on You". Wasn't there a number with a very similar title by Cole Porter just a few years later? The

show of 1916 contains a song "Dance, Lady, Dance", and that, too, sounds familiar. These Triangle Club songs are, incidentally, available from the same publisher.

Fitzgerald's literary poems of 1917-1920 are indebted to Swinburne, Dowson, and many others, as James Dickie points out in a Foreword that demands a great deal of Fitzgerald's verse but which is otherwise excellent. Interestingly enough, though, some of them came in handy for *This Side of Paradise*. "Princeton - The Last Day" is printed there as rhyming prose, while "On a Play Twice Seen" is scribbled by Amory on a blank page of his programme when he attended a stock-company revival of a play whose name was faintly familiar. That Amory Blaine is drawn largely from Fitzgerald himself is nothing new; but as both these poems had appeared in 1917 in Princeton's *Nassau Literary Magazine*, he was flaunting his education self-consciously. For a man of twenty, the ending of "On a Play Twice Seen" seems mature and achieved:

Yawning and wondering an evening through I watch alone - and chattering of course - did have charms; You wept a bit, and I grew sad for you. Right there, where Mr X defends divorce

And What's-Her-Name falls fainting in his arms. As intimate *vers de société*, the poem is charming and, if not profound, satisfying and even memorable.

Yet by 1919, as he was writing *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald was probably aware that he was unlikely to become a poet: "I'll never be a poet," said Amory as he finished. "I'm not enough of a sensualist really; there are only a few obvious things that I notice as primarily beautiful: women, spring evenings, music at night, the sea; I don't catch the subtle things like silver-snarl trumpet. I may turn out an intellectual, but I'll never be a poet."

That sudden smile across a room - Was certainly not learned from me. That first faint quiver of the bloom - The eyes' initial ecstasy. Whoever taught you how to page Your loves so sweetly - now as then I thank him for my heritage. That glance made bright by other men.

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Houses full of gentlemen

By Sara Pearl

ANN JENNALL COOK:
The Privileged Playgoers of
Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642
316pp. Princeton University Press.
£13.40.
0 691 06454 7

This book takes a fresh look at the kind of people who went to the theatre in the early seventeenth century. Ann Jennall Cook believes that they were not chiefly either the middle-class or the gentry-breathing labourers, but came from the ranks of what she calls the "privileged". This deliberately loose term, which avoids such controversial or restrictive labels as "upper class" or "gentry" extends upwards from scholars, clerics, lawyers and newly rich yeomen to the aristocracy. Only these people had enough education, leisure and money to patronize the theatre regularly.

The author begins by charting in great detail the enormous increase during the period of this social group and in particular its presence in London. As the centre of legal, commercial and political affairs, the capital attracted large numbers of wealthy provincials who were eager for entertainment. She presents seven centuries of London, with its expanding luxury goods, fashion and entertainment industries, as a playground for the idle rich. Indeed, was the mark of a gentleman, as Viscount Conway satirically noted, "to eat and drink and rise up to a play; and this is to live like a gentleman; for what is a gentleman but his pleasure?" By estimating the huge number of these pleasure-seekers in London, Ms Cook demonstrates that only five to ten per cent of this group need to have been regular theatre-goers to constitute over half of the total London audiences. But while this is a useful reminder of the size of the capital's wealthy population, and an indication of a potential audience, it hardly constitutes evidence that the privileged flocked to the public theatres. That they attended the more expensive private

theatres has never been under question. In a similar fashion, she argues that since plays figured prominently in a gentleman's experience (he would see them at school, university, the Inns of Court, and perhaps also at the houses of the aristocracy and at court), this must have instilled in him an insatiable desire for plays of any kind. But surely such a diet of private and select performances might equally well make gentlemen less inclined to attend the larger public theatres.

Ms Cook's use of documentary evidence is more convincing than her general historical speculations. She shows that gentlemen went in large numbers to the theatre before the establishment of the more exclusive boys' companies, and that privileged patrons continued going to the public playhouses when the adult troupes moved indoors. Visiting dignitaries recording their time in London frequently mention trips to public theatres, and among the wealthy Londoners who we know went to the Globe are John Chamberlain, Sir Humphrey Miley and the Duke of Buckingham. Moreover, the same plays were often presented at both private and public theatres, suggesting the shared tastes of the audiences.

Most interesting of all, Ms Cook shows that the Fortune and the Red Bull companies, generally thought of as providing rowdy and low-class entertainment, also attracted the privileged. The Red Bull company presented plays at court in the 1630s, and when Busho, the Venetian ambassador, went to the Fortune in 1617, he noted that "the best treat was to see such a crowd of nobility so very well arrayed that they looked like so many princes listening as silently and soberly as possible". The author also shows that large numbers of public theatre patrons were prepared to pay high prices for seats. There were twice as many expensive places in the gallery as cheap ones in the pit, and as she says, "Penny patrons alone could not have made the slow pace of the Burbages rich". Theatrical entrepreneurs had shared specifically in the profits from the galleries and might make as much as £10-12 a week, as Oliver Woodliffe

did in 1602-3 with his share in the gallery at the Swan's Head.

In the last chapter of the book the author turns from the "privileged" theatre-goers to the "plebeian" ones, arguing that these were a very small minority. Except for emulous merchants and some errant apprentices, she believes that London's citizens could not have afforded the time or the money to go to the theatre. Here she is on shakier ground. Recent historical research has shown that the number of men who owned and ran small family businesses was very high in London. Neither the time nor the cost would have kept them away. Moreover, the figures which she gives to prove that journeymen and servants would have found theatre too expensive are open to question. It is true that this was a period of steep inflation and fixed wages, and that food costs absorbed a relatively high proportion of the family budget. But the price of a ticket then was cheap compared with today. A penny admission fee represented only 1/72 of a journeyman's average weekly wage of six shillings. Today, a cinema ticket of £2 represents 1/30 of a weekly wage of £60. Even when the price of admission doubled at the end of the period, the proportion of the wage that this represents is hardly prohibitive.

Coming to maturity

By John Stachniewski

MARJORIE GARBER:
Coming of Age in Shakespeare
248pp. Methuen. £12.50.
0 416 30350 1

Marjorie Garber's title, adapted from Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, indicates her anthropological approach to Shakespeare. Both - in themselves a maturation rite at which audiences assist, and as embodiments of multifarious rites of passage to maturity. Such rites are tripartite: to represent phases of separation, transition and incorporation (in, for instance, the process of marrying). Shakespeare's characters are tested at critical junctures (or "thresholds") of their fictional lives, recognized as in primitive societies by ritual observances, and their performance under trial measures their progress towards mature adulthood.

Applied to individual characters with regard to their peculiar circumstances in the scarcely prohibitive

society of Shakespeare's plays, these rites of passage turn out to be bandily categorized categories. They include marriage (complicated by filial and peer-group ties), naming and induction into roles (with the associated questions of identity and achievement), and death (others as well as their own). Added to these are maturation rites in an unexplained extended sense. These cover pretty well any phase of life you can think of, whether or not accompanied by ritual: loss of innocence (or individualism), sexual awareness, acquisition of communicative language, establishment of secure identity by comparison and contrast with peers and parent-figures, defecation, pregnancy, parenthood, and so on.

Had the book stuck to ritual events, with which, from greetings to funerals, the plays are packed, its method would have seemed more eye and disciplined. As it is, after a tumble of references to anthropologists and psychoanalysts, the chapters deliver banalities. (Shakespeare's women "are frequently outspoken about their sexual feelings") and lazy critical non-sensibilities pressed into the service of an elusive theme. On *Measure for Measure* Marjorie Gar-

ber writes: "The Duke has been caused by cruelty . . . Claudio's 'death' becomes the instrument of Isabella's conversion from justice to mercy . . ." First, Garber presents as a novelty what few deny - that Isabella is subjected to an educative process. Second, she fails to see that viewing the Duke as cruel (or over-rationally manipulative) is not incompatible with this perception. Third, Isabella is not converted "from justice to mercy" (Garber's phrase is a typical grammatical laxity). In Act 2 Isabella speaks for mercy ("Why, all souls that were forfeit once . . .") as movingly as Portia and there is no evidence that she abandons belief in its primacy.

An anthropological approach could train the eye on ceremonial moments in the plays (such as the donning and doffing of veils, as symbolic deaths and rebirths) with a plidly comment on one another and on characters concerned. But this happens too rarely to Professor Garber's book. And her confident belief that "the plays offer us a cumulative portrait of what it means to be a successful adult" is desolatingly pertinent to Shakespeare.

مكتبة الأصل

Making friends with the fossils

By J. S. Weiner

RICHARD LEAKEY:

The Making of Mankind

256pp. Michael Joseph. £9.95.

0 7181 1931 2

DONALD C. JOHANSON and

MATILAND A. RUEY:

Lucy

The Beginnings of Humankind

409pp. Granada. £9.95.

0 246 11362 6

The Emergence of Man

A Joint Symposium of the Royal Society and the British Academy

held on March 12 and 13 1980

216pp. The Royal Society and British Academy. £21.

0 8543 158 8

Palaeoanthropology – the study of man's origins and evolution – is a two-faced affair: a profession with two kinds of practitioners. There are those who proclaim the story of man's evolution as a kaleidoscope of sensational and fabulous discoveries; this is for popular consumption. There are those who toil in the obscurity of the laboratory or at the computer terminal engaged in innumerable, tedious analyses and close interpretation. In its dual nature palaeoanthropology is by no means unique – naturalists, physicists, psychologists, historians all play the roles of both popular entertainers and committed academics. But palaeoanthropology is peculiar in that popularization has become highly organized and academically acceptable. Indeed institutionalized, particularly in the US. The reasons for this I shall come to in a moment.

This peculiar state of the subject is well illustrated by the three books

under review. Let us first remind ourselves that Charles Darwin's two great works were entitled *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, and both were of course entirely about evolution. There is nothing about Darwin's family (illustrious as it was) or his strivings, exploits, adventures, his excitements or his transports. Now Richard Leakey's book is entitled *The Making of Mankind*, an echo of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. But what gets pride of place here is the story of the Leakey family, its trials and triumphs and what Richard calls the "Leakey tradition".

It is through the doings of the Leakey family that we are told the story of the hominids. The narrative is graphic and breathless, discoveries are "amazing", "incredible", "absolutely fascinating". All is warm and friendly as we get to know the exploits of David, Ann, Mary, Kathy, Ellen and other friends and rivals, and how they feel about "Nutcracker Man", "Dear Boy", "Mrs Pies" and their fossil families. All in all, Mr Leakey has written a vivid and arresting account which takes us through the palaeolithic epochs into the world of present-day hunters, gatherers, simple agriculturalists and many other anthropologically interesting peoples.

Then there is the book about the glamorous "Lucy", whose highly distinctive family name, *Australopithecus*, given to her by her discoverer, D. C. Johanson, is rejected by some serious palaeontologists. Johanson's and Edey's book is also directed at the story of human evolution, but here the personalization and excitement is pitched at an even more feverish and hectic note. Dr Johanson just cannot get over his stunning luck in finding Lucy's bones (not all of them unfortunately). We are told a lot about Lucy and of the doings of her guardian. This book

does not sustain the narrative as readably and coherently as does Leakey's. It is marred by a number of errors, many engendered by the author's fondness for anecdote and reconstructed dialogue. The story here given, that it was Marston who urged the application of the fluorine dating method to the Piltdown remains, was indignantly repudiated by the late Kenneth Oakley. The general reader need not take too seriously the rather convoluted and often confusing arguments about the relationships of the many apparently different Australopithecine and Hominine fossils. But he will not fail to be impressed by the wealth of material now available bearing on the evolution of our species.

Every major discovery, over the past hundred years, of man's fossil forebears has been marked by controversy and publicity. But for a long time this was quite sporadic, recurring with every new claim and then subsiding and left to be fought over by the professionals. But, ever the past ten or fifteen years, there has emerged an almost permanent audience inside and outside the universities avid for a continuous diet of new and hotly contested facts. The presentation of the latest discoveries has been put on a well-organized PR basis. A troupe of field workers – fossil searchers, ape and monkey watchers, famulars of primitive hunter-gatherers – command large and enthusiastic audiences on the US lecture circuits. There are also TV presentations, dramatic museum displays and so on. The books by Leakey and Johanson convey very well the fascination exerted by this kind of promotion of palaeoanthropology.

How has all this come about? There is no real mystery here. Louis Leakey was a visionary who saw the

enormous potential for major fossil discovery in Africa. To realize his vision he needed all the financial (and political) support he could muster – from foundations, universities, private and public benefactors. So he wore himself out lecturing to gatherings large and small, covering great distances from his Nairobi home throughout the US and Western Europe. At his death he had succeeded in establishing Nairobi as the world base for anthropological and archaeological discovery, and a major centre for the storage, cleaning, reconstruction and study of fossils and artefacts. And Richard Leakey has consolidated his father's work. But the intense pressure for support remains. And so the maintenance of large popular audiences is needed and they help greatly to keep the field-work going.

But of course this popular palaeoanthropology is parasitic on, and badly overshadows, the real discipline of modern, sophisticated palaeoanthropology. Because of the peculiar popularization of the subject I believe the "respectable" scientific community does not fully appreciate the extent to which modern palaeoanthropology is really a science of high technology. With its complex techniques of chemical, immunological and physical dating, of highly advanced statistical, not to mention cladistic evaluation, of geochronology and geo-ecology, it is as rigorous and demanding a science as any.

Even the non-specialist will appreciate this (to some extent) if he looks into *The Emergence of Man* – a well-produced report of a symposium jointly organized recently by the Royal Society and the British Academy. Here we can see what is really entailed in the unravelling of the evolutionary history of mankind. There is the major question of the

degree of genetic affinity between present-day men, apes and monkeys. What can be learnt from the DNA-coded sequences of modern primates – how far and how fast they diverge, and do these genetic "distances" fit the fossil record? And how, and when, did the fossil record diverge, and what precision, are the dates which go back to 10 million years and more (and which are scattered throughout Leakey's and Johanson's books) arrived at? There is a splendid article on this subject by G. H. Currie. For a judicious review of the status of the many, all too fragmentary, fossil remains of the prehistoric era, see a first-rate job going carefully and coolly through the labyrinth of claims and counter-claims (such as we read about in Lucy) and making what seems to me the best synthesis of the available evidence. What it means to study the dentition and dietary habits from examination of fossil teeth is impressively displayed in the papers by B. A. Wood and A. Walker respectively.

And yet even in this company of experts the eccentric and speculative has crept in. R. H. Tuttle continues to give credence to Sir Alister Hardy's hypothesis of man's aquatic phase of evolution, a notion for which after twenty years he had evidence has yet appeared.

This fine volume also brings together a number of thoughtful contributions on an evolutionary approach to the neuro-psychology of human communication and behaviour. The whole endeavour is clearly and succinctly put into perspective, as one would expect, by J. Z. Young's introduction and his summing up – a perspective of our not overwhelming yet still increasing understanding of the evolution of humankind.

Of greater account than these and many other cavils, however, is that at last we have a good account of the waterways made by the late C. O. Waters. These have been extracted from the drawer in the Pitt Rivers Museum where they have lain so long. Similarly, for the first time we have details and drawings of the Kent's Cavern hand-axes. There is a very useful survey of the distinctive Mousterian flat-butted cordate hand-axes, which the author insists on

calling *bout coupé* hand-axes although the term is not used in France. Virtually all sites of consequence dealt with in a sensible, balanced manner. Inevitably, since the book has been written, new discoveries have been made or published. There were some artificial structures at Foxton; there is now a large collection from Pontnewydd Cave and a human tooth; and High Lodge, although still unpublished, appears to be of a much earlier date than suspected.

Natural causes

By Norman Hammond

IAN SIMMONS and MICHAEL TOOLEY

(Editors):

The Environment in British Prehistory

334pp., Duckworth. £24 (paperback, £7.95).

0 7156 1441 X

This collective volume is intended as a companion to Colin Renfrew's stellar compendium *British Prehistory*, issued by Duckworth in 1974 (and reviewed in the *TLS* on March 14, 1975). It has the same jacket design, paperback and chapter divisions, so that the palaeolithic, mesolithic, neolithic, bronze and iron ages continue in their enigmatic unity. The period chapters are preceded by an outline by Michael Tooley of the methods used in palaeoenvironmental reconstruction, and succeeded by a coda on "Culture and Environment" by Ian Simmons, and by an excellent, full bibliography. It is a book covering more than the same ground as John G. Evans' *The Environment of Early Man in the British Isles* (1975), but with perhaps rather fuller coverage of the later periods, and with the benefit of much recent work by the authors and others to draw on.

Although the archaeological material is subordinated to the ecological, as one might expect, enough is brought in to give a good idea of

cultural development. Radiocarbon dates and pollen diagrams are extensively used to frame the arguments, and the faunal evidence is most intelligently deployed. The book is less of a complement to *British Prehistory* than a replacement of it, better than the ideal companion to Simmons and Tooley's volume today is surely J. V. S. Megaw and D. D. A. Simpson's *Introduction to British Prehistory* (Leicester University Press, 1979).

Papers of the British School at Rome, Volume XLVIII (1970) (208pp plus 34 plates. £12. British School at Rome at 1 Lower Brompton Road, London SW7 2AZ. The volume, as the editor T. P. Wiseman indicates in a preface note, is dedicated in part to the memory of John Ward-Perkins, who as Director of the School from 1946 to 1974 contributed decisively to its re-emergence as an active and valued institution. Ward-Perkins himself contributes a paper on "Mediterranean and the Marble Trade" to the present collection, as well as an appreciation (together with F. Zevi and R. B. Rutherford) of Martin W. Fredericksen. Other contributors include David Potter, house S. Cornelia, Richard Hodges, Graeme Barker and Keith Wade on "Excavations at D85 (Santa Maria in Civita). An Early Medieval Hilltop Settlement in 'Molise', and N. C. Houseley on "The Franco-Papal Crusade Negotiations of 1322-3".

Imperial beginnings

By J. H. Parry

G. V. SCAMMELL:

The World Encompassed

The first European maritime empires

c.800-1650

538pp. Methuen. £14.95.

0 416 76280 8

Books about empires have proliferated in the past twenty-five years, as was to be expected in a generation that saw the break-up or abandonment of all the remaining empires administered from centres in western Europe. Decline and fall are always interesting. Interest was further quickened by the rhetoric of local independence movements, and by the grave approval of those who saw national determination pursuing its destined path in "developing" parts of the world. When independence proved, after a few years, to be a disillusioning experience – as it did in some places – there was a further motive for writing books about empires: to show that the failures and shortcomings of newly independent states could be laid at the door of former imperial rulers, who had so cowed and exploited dependent peoples as to unfit them to govern themselves; or else to suggest that "colonialism" in altered forms had managed to avert the demise of empires, so continuing the process of exploitation. The effect of this kind of argument, for many people, was to turn the derivative words "colonialism", "imperialism", and so on, into indiscriminate terms of abuse having no precise connection with empires; and to produce a reaction. Some recent books about empires – not only the reminiscences of pros and cons, but serious works of academic history – have a nostalgic ring, a tendency to point out that the colonial empires in their day performed useful functions, now performed by no one.

The contemporary world society may or may not be better off without the European colonial empires; but it is inescapably a society which they helped in large measure to create. For many years a large part of the earth's inhabited surface was administered

by centres in Europe. Small bodies of Europeans were responsible for the government, the economic welfare and development, the political behaviour, of hundreds of millions of people in dependent territories all over the world, and historians naturally wish to inquire how, why, and when this state of affairs came about. The story of the origin and growth of empires, no less than that of their break-up and disappearance, deserves attention both for its intrinsic interest and as a key to the understanding of the world of today; and in fact books about their rise, though fewer than books about their fall, have appeared in increasing numbers in recent years. *The World Encompassed* is one of the best.

Most accounts of the European empires begin their story in the fifteenth century, conventionally with the expedition which Prince Henry of Portugal sent to explore West Africa and to settle some of the Atlantic islands. G. V. Scammell takes a much longer span of time. He starts with Norse expansion in the ninth century, and deals with four empires in four separate chapters – the Norse, the Hanse, the Venetian Republic, the Genoese Republic – before Portugal is even mentioned. This is a sensible and logical arrangement; of the four, three exercised powerful influences on Spain and Portugal at the time when Iberian expansion was beginning, and were much more than mere precursors. On the other hand, it poses problems of definition, as the author says in his Introduction. "Empire" implies command, "the dominion exercised by one people or state over other peoples, lands, or states"; but in modern usage it implies somewhat more than conquest, settlement, or economic domination, it implies territorial administration from a metropolitan centre, the dominion exercised by a metropolis over dependencies.

It requires something of a stretch to apply this definition to the widely scattered, mutually independent raids, conquests, settlements and trading enterprises undertaken by various Scandinavian groups, from Sweden to Sicily and from Novgorod to Newfoundland. Still more of a

stretch is needed to apply the term to the network of *kontors* – however profitable, however locally powerful – operated by the North German *Hanse*, a league of trading cities which carefully avoided territorial acquisitions, and accepted no administrative responsibility whatever for the people it dealt with. The *Hanse* chapter is, in fact, a succinct (and masterly) account of the spread of German influence east and south; a process in which rulers, Military Orders and colonizing peasants all played their part and in which the *Hanse* was only one agent among several.

In dealing with the Mediterranean maritime empires, Mr Scammell is on firmer ground. Venice and Genoa – Venice especially – fulfilled all the imperial requirements, including territorial administration, though on a relatively restricted scale, and always firmly subordinated to considerations of trade. Venice has been well served by historians in recent years, notably by F. C. Lane; Genoa less so. The chapter on Genoa is perhaps the most suggestive and the most useful in the book. It is curious that no mention is made of the Latin states in Syria and Palestine. They, surely, were imperial undertakings by the broad definitions of this book. They were the product of European conquest among alien people; they lasted three hundred years; though not administered from Europe, they depended on European support for their survival; and most of their communications with Europe were by sea.

The last five chapters deal with the oceanic empires: Portugal, Spain, Holland, France, England, respectively. In these chapters the difficulties of compression are more evident. The literature on the Spanish empire, in particular, is enormous. There is an odd allusion (p. 369) to the "largely unworked" archives of Spain. All those PhD dissertations from Texas and California? Though it is true that notarial archives, and even government archives to remote parts of Spanish America, where they survive, have so far been little explored. Some other statements in the Spain and Portugal chapters may be challenged. It is not true (p. 256) that Albornoz was the only writer of

any consequence to condemn the African slave trade. There were not many, it is true; but the *De Aethiopum Salute Restauranda* of Gonzalo de Sandoval is one of the most blistering attacks in any language on the enslavement of Africans and the cruelties by which the trade was executed. It is also one of the best informed; Sandoval was of the best informed; Sandoval was not only a missionary, but also an anthropologist of real distinction. Nor is it quite true that the redoubtable Las Casas, towards the end of his life, "extended his compassion to Africans" (p. 257). He certainly recommended the prohibition of further imports; but his chief reason for this change of mind was the brutality of Negroes towards Indians, when employed – as they often were – as overseers of Indian labour. The statement (p. 507) that "Vespucci claimed to have preceded the admiral to America" is misleading, to say the least. It follows the line of the late S. E. Morison, who enjoyed outpoken salubrity fun at the expense of Vespucci among them. Most statements about Vespucci are controversial; but there is no surviving evidence that he ever claimed to have been the first discoverer of the New World. His claim to have touched, in 1497, the mainland of South America, is in a printed pamphlet doubtfully attributed to him. The Truce of Antwerp (p. 366) conceded not that the Dutch "could trade where they wanted", but that they could trade wherever the local rulers (eg in the East) allowed them to do so. The overseas possessions of the Crown of Spain and Portugal were still formally out of bounds.

On more general matters, perhaps a little more attention might have been paid to the didactic strain in the government of the major overseas empires: not only the recognition of a duty to proselytize (which was by no means universal) but the

urge to administer, perhaps to improve and civilize, in a secular sense. Call it sense of responsibility, call it the itch to set the affairs of others to rights, it was present in varying degrees in all the empires, once the hardships of conquest or the initial hardships of settlement were over. It was strongest in Spain. It was in effectual, of course, against the ravages of disease (though not for want of well-meant ministrations in some places). It was only partially effective against the ravages of human greed; but it had a considerable influence on official policy, it produced a volume of notable – indeed noble – writing, and it set standards for the conduct of empire in later centuries. It was weaker, both in the religious and secular senses, in the other empires, but present in some degree in all of them. Even in England, the sermons preached at St Paul's Cross in support of the Virginia Company were not only exercises in public relations.

The book has good maps, small in scale, but helpful and uncluttered. The illustrations, though sparse, are useful in interpreting the design and rig of ships. The bibliography is comprehensive, critical and up-to-date; few significant works are overlooked. One minor complaint: a search for typographical errors is the last resort of a reviewer who can think of nothing more useful to say. But here, alas, there is no need to search: the book has more than its fair share. Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* of 1599 (p. 519) should have been picked up. There is a sinister ring about commanders being "couped" up in tiny ships (p. 50), and it is sad to see a distinguished former curator of maps at the British Museum cited as "Skeleton" (p. 503). But these are trivia; they do not detract from the merits of a well-informed, thoroughly competent and very useful book.

The artefactual aggregate

By J. J. Wymer

DEREK A. ROE:

The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic

Periods in Britain

324pp. 38 plates. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £35.

0 7100 0600 4

When Derek Roe compiled his gazetteer of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic sites in Britain, which was published in 1968 by the Council for British Archaeology, this was the first time since 1897 that the overall distribution of the stone material available for study could be assessed. It was a laborious compilation, but it made no attempt to go beyond tabulated lists. There was no discussion of the context of the material, no comments on delinquencies or omissions, nothing beyond a basic typological classification related to museums, collections and provenances. Now, in this new volume, we have an explanation of how this great wealth of artefactual evidence might be interpreted.

General reviews of the British Palaeolithic period have been published in the past decade by Paul Mellars, Alex. Morrison and myself. None has the archaeological detail contained in this book, which is more than a review; it is an assessment by a first hand who has handled virtually all the Palaeolithic artefacts found in Britain, has measured thousands of them and knows the relevant literature. To my knowledge, Dr Roe has never dug in the field, but he has followed Sir Mortimer Wheeler's advice and excavated in museum cellars. The emphasis of his book is thus on the artefacts themselves: hand-axes, flakes, and other tools. Geological evidence, placed within a time-range of perhaps half a million years, and the gist of the book is a compelling, technical argument as to how they may fit into it.

As Roe admits at the beginning, it would be very convenient if the material could be described in a

neat, chronological order, but anyone familiar with the British Pleistocene knows that it is difficult to make any statement or conclusion without some qualification. "Peculiar" in a scientific sense, are frustratingly elusive, doubtful or unrepeatable. In the meantime, the Swenscombe Northfleet sequence must do.

Roe is to be congratulated on the clarity with which he expounds his theme. This book reads so easily that I am sure he must have re-written it many times. He is never dogmatic or shy of a shelter behind unecessary jargon. For such a complex subject he has managed to retain a surprising amount of narrative. This is an ideal volume, indeed, from which to learn new Palaeolithic studies have progressed and where they now stand. It is the summing up of an era, an era of development, for gone are the days of lone flint collectors and 'archaeologists' pronouncing their opinions as though they were sanctioned and beyond criticism, let alone reasoned scrutiny. It will help all those currently engaged on reconstructing the past to understand the problems confronting Palaeolithic archaeologists, and will also serve as a useful reference book. Some material is published here for the first time, there is a good list of carefully selected references, and a suitable index.

Specialists will have many queries. For example, I have no doubts about the Sidestrand hand-axe except for its provenance. Scully (see Levallois) I see no reason for querying the Cienician status of the Barnham industry and I have excavated material there that I have in my collection; I prefer Kukla's assessment of the correlation between marine and terrestrial climatic episodes and would equate the Hoxnian with Stage 11, not 7; I thought the Acheulean at High Lodge was in a primary context within a fluvial channel, not in solution depression; Moir's account of Brandon does not tally with the artefacts preserved at Ipswich Museum; the relative age of the Boy's Hill and Lyndy Hill, faces of the Thames are very uncertain; why is Gollins' work on Viewley excluded?

Of greater account than these and many other cavils, however, is that at last we have a good account of the waterways made by the late C. O. Waters. These have been extracted from the drawer in the Pitt Rivers Museum where they have lain so long. Similarly, for the first time we have details and drawings of the Kent's Cavern hand-axes. There is a very useful survey of the distinctive Mousterian flat-butted cordate hand-axes, which the author insists on

calling *bout coupé* hand-axes although the term is not used in France. Virtually all sites of consequence dealt with in a sensible, balanced manner. Inevitably, since the book has been written, new discoveries have been made or published. There were some artificial structures at Foxton; there is now a large collection from Pontnewydd Cave and a human tooth; and High Lodge, although still unpublished, appears to be of a much earlier date than suspected.

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commentary

Ark on the road

By Peter Keating

Beasts on Wheels
Scottish Arts Council Travelling
Gallery

When Jeremiah Wombwell, the founding-father of travelling menageries, died in 1850, *The Times* praised him for his work in "forwarding practically the study of natural history among the masses". It seems unlikely that Wombwell's lions and tigers, elephants and rhinos, had precisely that effect on many spectators: the serious student of natural history in the early nineteenth century would have turned to the permanent menageries and "zoological gardens" then being established in response to public interest.

Wombwell's role was inspirational, to excite wonder and amazement as he took his animals on the road to places where people would willingly pay to see, often for the first time, such exotic beasts as the "Unicorn of Scripture", "Camelopard", and "Polar Monster".

It is particularly fitting that the Scottish Arts Council's celebration of nineteenth-century menageries should take the form of an exhibition in the Travelling Gallery, an imaginatively converted double-decker bus that will be touring the Strathclyde region until the end of February. Nowadays the animals are familiar: it is the concept of an art gallery that is the popularizing, and "Beasts on Wheels" serves several functions simultaneously. It offers some fine examples of Victorian popular art in an unconventional setting while still managing to evoke the atmosphere of a small traditional gallery, and it carries itself - like the menagerie it portrays - to its potential customers. For most of January "Beasts on Wheels" is visiting Glasgow; in February, it moves on to Renfrew

and Dumbarton, making day or half-day stops at factories, shopping precincts, schools, community centres and hospitals (a detailed itinerary is available from Elizabeth Macgregor, Travelling Gallery, Scottish Arts Council, 19 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4DF.)

The restricted space of the Travelling Gallery means that only a fraction of the pictorial art inspired by Victorian menageries can be displayed, but even so much has been found for garish posters, line engravings, some delicate lithographs and a good deal of miscellaneous information. There is also a romantic watercolour by J. Atkinson of the Bostock and Wombwell caravans on the road, pulled by the huge, gentle dray-horses that were, ironically, the most crucial animals in the whole exercise.

Dmy-horses were utilitarian and mundane: it was sensation that the Victorian public demanded and Wombwell provided. The entrance fee was one shilling for adults, sixpence for children, with the "labouring classes" allowed in at half-price after 6 p.m. For their money they were promised a sight of "the grandest collection of WILD FLESH EATING ANIMALS ever seen in this or any other country". Special attractions were sought after and highly paid. Wombwell boasted proudly on his posters that he was paying for Madame Salva, "the unrivelled African Lion Huntress", £40 per week to parade her "Fiercest-bred African Lions and Lionesses, blood-thirsty Bengal Tigers, ravenous Wolves and Russian Hybrids".

The occasional disaster confirmed that the animals really were wild and no doubt did little harm to the takings. In 1857 Ellen Bright, the "Lion Queen", was mauled to death during her net, and for a while women were banned from such dangerous activities. A later tragic ending resulted from one of Wombwell's publicity stunts. In 1825 he promoted a fight



An advertisement for Wombwell's Royal Menagerie, which took to the road in the early nineteenth century under the patronage of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Royal Family. The poster is on loan from the Bodleian Library in the exhibition reviewed here.

between six bull-mastiff dogs and a tame lion called Nero. When Nero appeared to be in trouble, a wilder lion called Wallace was let loose on the dogs. This stage-managed event was recorded in a romanticized broadside ballad "Meekness and Magnanimity", which is on show in the exhibition. In this the original inspiration behind that other "ferocious and wild" lion called Wallace who swallowed little Albert Ramsbottom?

There is also a coloured engraving of an "infuriated elephant" being shot by soldiers that raises another possible literary source - the Wombwell elephant in *The Old Wives Tale* whose execution causes so much ex-

citement in Bursley. Arnold Bennett's elephant submits tamely to his fate: the menagerie elephant struggles to get out of his wooden cage and at the soldiers.

"Beasts on Wheels" does not concentrate exclusively on Wombwell, but inevitably he dominates the exhibition. After his death the business was divided among various relatives, notably E. H. Bostock who tried, successfully for a while, to continue the tradition. But the travelling menagerie was already becoming too expensive to run and, perhaps, the number of new sensations it could offer was falling. The kind of competition it now had to face a com-

veyed by a splendid souvenir programme of a performance by Barnum's circus of "The Destruction of Rome", featuring "bewitching dances", "triumphal processions" and "gorgeous scenes of imperial orgies". Clearly the "Unicorns of Scripture" and "Camelopard" had bad their day.

Well, not quite. The pamphlet accompanying the "Beasts on Wheels" exhibition adds a sad footnote. In 1909 when Bostock was forced to give up the business, many of his animals went to Scottish museums and art galleries where they can still be seen - looking ferocious, but stuffed.

The Society of Indexes

The year 1982 marks the Silver Jubilee of the Society of Indexers. It was only a few years ago that one publisher referred to "those on the dusty fringes of the academic world who compile indexes and bibliographies", but there is nothing dusty about the Society today. It was formed in March 1957 when G. Norman Knight wrote a letter to *The Times* inviting other indexers to get in touch with him, with this purpose in mind. His first wish was to provide a link between people doing similar work and to remove the intense feeling of isolation which the free-lance indexer experienced while working alone.

The Society has now grown to become the professional association for English-speaking indexers outside Australia, Canada and the United States - which have their own societies affiliated to the original British one. It exists to promote the establishment and maintenance of internationally-recognized standards of indexing; to monitor the training of new indexers; to provide for liaison and exchange of information between all concerned with indexing advice or qualifications and remuneration of indexers. A Register of approved and available indexers is maintained for the use of publishers, authors and information-retrieval concerns.

In the winter months an evening programme of meetings, each with a speaker or theme, is arranged. Conferences are held at about three-yearly intervals in all parts of the country. Contact with members is maintained by the mailing of regular Newsletters and by the Journal of the Society. The *Indexer*, which is published twice-yearly and has a worldwide subscription list,

The original number of sixty members who met in 1957 has increased tenfold in the intervening years, with a growing overseas membership list, and the Society has done much to improve the standards of indexing and the status of indexers during that time. It remains an increasingly active body, fully aware that there is still much to be done in the year ahead in the light of modern developments in word processing and computer technology, with which, in this Year of Information Technology, it is bound to become increasingly involved.

Hilda Pearson

FEI XIAOTONG & Sociology in Revolutionary China

by R. DAWIDKUSH

Fei Xiaotong, one of China's leading social scientists, trained in London under Malinowski and achieved eminence in the 1930s and 40s for his pioneering studies of Chinese peasant life, and for his popular articles which stirred a wide audience in China to an awareness of social and political problems. A non-Marxist who came to sympathize with the Communists, Fei was gradually constrained in his activities after the Revolution until, in the 1950s, a massive propaganda campaign vilified him as a bourgeois rightist. Intellectual. Almost 20 years of silence followed. Following the death of Mao, Fei suddenly reemerged as a leader in the effort to revitalize the social sciences in China; recently he served as one of the judges in the trial of the Gang of Four. Harvard East Asian

Monographs, published January, £10.50.
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD

Contretemps at Imber

By Patricia Craig

The Bell
BBC TV

"Dora Greenfield left her husband because she was afraid of him. She decided six months later to return to him for the same reason." So Iris Murdoch tells us in the opening sentences of her fourth novel *The Bell* (1958), now adapted for television by Reg Gadeny, with proper attention to the atmosphere (strange and strained) and the nuances of feeling (devious) to be found in the original. The new opening, though, is conspicuously less succinct and subtle than Iris Murdoch's; someone has actually decided to top the novel's symbolism with a topless nun (a guest at a party in fancy dress who performs a striptease), a figure meant, presumably, to travesty the life-saving nun who appears later. A party is shown in progress - a rather hectic affair, which indicates something about Dora's present mode of life; the fact that she picks this moment, when she can't be heard above the noise of the band, to announce her intention of returning to her husband, indicates something about Dora, an engaging bungling quality that may be equated with spontaneity and lack of calculation. These, and other details of the television prologue, do not distort the novelist's purpose but simply underline it rather too heavily. Once Dora is on the train bound for Imber, however, the dramatization acquires a more satisfactory style (helped by dialogue supplied directly by Iris Murdoch).

Imber Court, to which naughty Dora has been summoned by her erstwhile husband Paul Greenfield, is the headquarters of an Anglican lay community which seems exactly constituted to confirm the outsider's suspicions about such quasi-religious fraternities, consisting as it does of a group of wretchedly ill-adjusted individuals engaged in creating an impression of tranquillity. The Court regards itself as an adjunct to the nearby Abbey, which houses an enclosed order of nuns; the Abbey contains the fourteenth-century manuscripts that have brought Paul an embezzlement of marital severity to Imber. Actually, Paul is a beastlier in the novel than he is in the serial (the opening episode anyway; he deteriorates later), where he appears no worse than moderately peeved and aggrieved by Dora's "escapes"; his bookish precision of speech has gained a faintly humorous undertone in James Wright's play. In the novel, it's clear, though, that Paul causes his wife to feel "filmy and ephemeral", not quite real.

There's a productive element to

Dora's disorder: her behaviour at least is wholehearted and uncontrived, if never completely sensible or admirable. At Imber, she arouses mild irritation in Michael Meade, leader of the community and owner of Imber Court, whose antipathy, fortunately, is tempered with bonhomie. Michael, an ex-schoolmaster, who has made of Imber a kind of halfway house between the world and the cloister, is spiritually handicapped (in his own view) by an ineluctable imperfection: homosexual leanings. A number of exorbitant infatuations contribute to the plot of *The Bell*; one of these exists - or has existed - between Michael and his drunken ex-pupil Nick Fawley, now inhabiting the gate lodge at Imber, ostensibly to be near his sister Catherine who is staying at the Court before joining the nuns.

Nuns, homosexuals, innocents, hysterics, the prudish and the imprudent, the tortured and the tertius; add a picturesque legend, a schoolgirl scheme, a couple of near-drownings, an Abbess, a Bishop, and a ceremony fated to go extravagantly wrong, and you have a list of ingredients that positively invites facetious comment. It would be wrong to make game, and nothing else, of the dramatization, however. Iris Murdoch's careful consideration of traits and motivations, her intricate symbolism and accuracy of explication, its true, are only of limited use to the dramatist who must rely, above all, on straightforward action and interaction between people. Fortunately, an abundance of events and asides, all of them deftly transferred to the screen, makes the loss of the more discursive parts of the book seem relatively unimportant. The casting, too, could hardly have been bettered. Ian Holm is excellent as Michael Meade; Tessie Peake-Jones gets the right kind of gaucheness and exuberance into her portrayal of Dora; Trudie Styler as Catherine Fawley, the would-be postulant, gives a suitably highly-strung performance; and Michael Maloney makes an agreeably diffident and impressive Toby Gashe.

Eighteen-year-old Toby, who has come to Imber at the invitation of Michael's second-in-command James Tayper Pace, is Dora's accomplice in a clandestine undertaking: a plan to raise a six-hundred-year-old bell from the bottom of a lake, and substitute it for a new bell which is due to be installed at the Abbey; this action Dora sees as a piece of prestidigitation, miracle-like in its felicity. "In this holy community she would play the witch."

With Dora playing the witch, her journalist boy-friend Noel Spens (less frivolous and more philistine here, I think, than the author intended) arriving hot-foot from London to play the debunker, and Nick Fawley bent on playing the saboteur, a contretemps of monumental proportions is assured. There is nothing random about the design or the moral implications of *The Bell*; it is based on a series of alibi-like reactions of past dramas (it's the precise pattern of events, as well as the cool assurance of the narrative tone, that places the novel firmly in the genre of moral comedy), all of them involving betrayal of one kind or another. When the bell rings out (in the middle of the night) what it provides is a knell that summons members of the community to various bad ends.

It is a versatile symbol - too versatile, you might say. For Dora, it is a romantic "magical" object; in James's view, it stands for clarity and candour; Michael regards it as a symbol of "spiritual energy". For Catherine, there is not too much distinction between the bell and Sylvia Plath's "bell jar". In the novel, perhaps, the bell carries more weight than it can easily sustain; the television version, with its freer technique, and emphasis on verisimilitude rather than form, actually gets more out of the central emblem by making less of it.



A watercolour by Mrs W. Musgrave of William Makepeace Thackeray (left) with two companions - probably Isabella Shaw, whom Thackeray later married, and his brother Arthur, 1835. The picture is on show at the Covent Garden Gallery, 30 Russell Street, London WC2, until February 18.

A kind of Ahab

By Richard Combs

Cutter's Way
Various cinemas

Cutter's Way is after big game. The spring of its plot is a murder mystery - who killed a teenage hitch-hiker and left her mutilated body in an alley one rainy night in Santa Barbara? But finding the killer matters less than defining what he stands for. In other words, what is going on in the minds of his pursuers, and why they should want to pin the crime on the town's wealthiest and most powerful citizen, absorbs most of the film's attention. In the end, one is not even allowed the satisfaction of knowing whether or not he actually did it. One must assume either that the amateur sleuths are simply paranoid about men who have the power to "get away" with things, or that they are paranoid with good reason.

Big as this game is, however, it is not all that the film is after. Vietnam slides shifty in as an extra dimension to the story, and then, even more shifty, slides out again. The enigmatic character, Alex Cutter (John Heard), is a Vietnam veteran who has returned minus an arm, a leg and an eye, and now stomps about his green and privileged homeland like some wrathful demon, drunk, fractious, scornful of the country for which he has sacrificed so much of himself and scornful of his wife, Mo (Lisa Eilhorn), and one close friend, Richard Bone (Jeff Bridges), who are trying to help him return to life. Out of his frustration and his "hunger" (as he describes it), Cutter fixes on oil tycoon J. J. Cord as the murderer, not only of the girl in the alley but of the better part of himself.

What makes one slightly uncomfortable about the Vietnam connection is the immediate bluntness of interpretation it allows. There is already a whole genre of movies about disgruntled veterans "bringing the war back home". But not even the more serious of them (Karel Reisz's *Dog Soldiers*, for instance) have managed to make more than sociological fodder out of the subject. Vietnam is still too large and recent a subject to be so easily reducible - although several reviewers of *Cutter's Way* have praised it for taking this as its message. Certainly the most lapel-grabbing and silted scene in an otherwise tightly-written script is one in which Cutter defies

for Bone and for us the meaning of Vietnam. But despite the constant presence of poor crippled Cutter, the war fades in significance as the biggest game of all comes into the film's sights.

This is first suggested as Cutter mockingly addresses Bone as his Ishmael and obviously intends that we should see him as a kind of Ahab. Cutter, one senses rather obscurely, used to be very much part of the wealthy Santa Barbara community, and has been set apart not just by unfortunate circumstances but by his own wilfulness. Bone, who seems the more privileged, is actually the drifter, footloose not only physically but morally (as Cutter eventually accuses him of being). Ironically, it is Bone who brings Cutter his Moby Dick. Having inadvertently been present in the alley on the night of the murder, Bone is questioned by the police, but can only remember seeing the shadowy figure of a man who then nearly ran him down in his car. Later, while watching a parade in Santa Barbara's Old Spanish Days fiesta (flooding the film with more American history, costumes and disguise), Bone sees J. J. Cord ride by on a horse and is certain for a moment that he was the man in the alley.

He changes his mind shortly afterwards, but Cutter seizes on the suggestion. With the help of the dead girl's sister, he begins building a crazy case against Cord, by which they will first extort money from him, then hand him over to the police. Bone alternately resists the scheme and reluctantly goes along with it, perhaps because he finds it hard to stay out of Cutter's obsessive orbit or because he is half in love with Mo (who has made her own self-destructive commitment to Cutter).

The relationship between the two men is the holding centre of the film, an intense and, in a way, diabolical manifestation of the American cinema's buddy theme. It also takes in some mordant reflections on the subject of heroism, with the image of a man on a white charger recurring throughout the film (reminiscent of the white whale). The director of *Cutter's Way*, Ivan Passer, who worked with Milos Forman in the 1960s, and directed the well-known film *Intimate Lighting*, before going into exile in the United States. There he has made several films, which now look like mere preparation for this supremely strange act of cultural assimilation and detachment.

New Oxford Books: History

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T.W. Moody

Michael Davitt was an Irish revolutionary nationalist who abandoned republican orthodoxy to become the inspiring genius of a social revolution. In 1879 he founded the Irish National Land League, which successfully mobilized the tenant farmers against the landlords with the aim of raising eviction and ultimately of abolishing 'landlordism' altogether. Illustrated £22.50 4 February

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The aim of this book is to provide an overview of Scottish rural history from prehistoric times down to the eve of the Improvements Movement in the eighteenth century. The author adopts the relationship between land and society as his central theme, and he emphasises throughout on explaining rather than just describing the patterns and institutions of the early Scottish countryside. Illustrated £22.50

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John Lough

This book examines the practical changes advocated by the *Philosophes* in France in the decades before the Revolution, and seeks to establish how far these changes were realized from 1789 onwards. £19.50

Zionism

The Formative Years David Vital

In this sequel to *The Origins of Zionism* the author traces and explains the emergence of the Zionist movement through which the Jews were to a large extent reformed as a political people. In 1897, Theodor Herzl launched the Zionist movement, and Professor Vital concentrates on the following decade which saw the establishment of the movement's main ideas and central institutions and its modes of political, social, and economic action. £22.50

Oxford University Press

commentary

Tracing the lineage

By Celina Fox

Mr Walter Sickert and his Print-maker Friends and Relations
Parkin Gallery, 11 Motcomh St.
London SW1.

Sickert once remarked of the overpraised "illustrators of the 'sixties' that they did not contain sufficient stamina to make them worth breeding from. An exhibition outlining a graphic lineage which starts with Whistler and ends with the Sickert 'girls' provides an opportunity to aim the gibe rather closer to home.

Sickert and Mortimer Menpes (whose work is also represented) were as young men almost totally dependent on Whistler, accompanying him on his early morning sketching expeditions and imitating his style. They too concentrated on the essentials of a scene, hinting with a flickering, nervous line at depths undiscussed in the surrounding blank space. Velvety tonal effects were achieved with drypoint and thin films of ink wiped across the plate; the margins were trimmed close to the platemark. But by the late 1880s, Sickert had moved away from the master and in a print of the beach at Scheveningen, not only is there a freshness in the observation of the curves of wicker *windstoelen* and umbrellas, but also a suggestion in the figures of the down-to-earth humour which is never far removed from his work.

By 1908, the friendship had been broken for over ten years and in reviewing the Pennells' life of Whistler, Sickert condemned his later prints as "a feast of facile and dainty sketching on copper". Sickert loathed what he saw as the amateurism of the loosely-called "revival of etching" of the late-nineteenth century; he constantly stressed the value of sound drawing and the need to reveal the

intrinsic characteristics of the medium. All his best works fulfil these requirements.

This show, which continues until February 13, contains a good selection from the Camden Town period, the Carfax series and those published in the Leicester Galleries in the 1920s. These latter works provide a fascinating comparison with the recent Late Sickert exhibition at the Hayward Gallery. Both in subject matter and technique, Sickert's prints were closely related to his drawings and oils. A work like "Cheer", with its strong black-and-white abstractions of shape, has more energy and clarity than his painting of the same spectacle - a chorus-line of Plaza Tiller girls - and recalls the snapshots which provided the basis for so many late portraits.

Sickert taught both at established art schools and his own private classes, passing on his experience to pupils, the majority of whom were women. Michael Parkin has contributed more than anyone to the appreciation of their talents and in this exhibition there are prints by Sylvia Gosse, Enid Bagnold and Wendela Borel. They learnt from Sickert the Camden Town vocabulary of music-hall balconies and boarding-house rooms with iron bedsteads, before venturing with a certain air of diffidence to explore subject-matter further afield. But they lacked the asstringency of viewpoint and confidence to experiment on the scale which gave Sickert's prints their strength. The faithful Sylvia Gosse continued to follow rather too closely his example while after her marriage, Wendela Borel, possibly the printmaker with the most original potential, worked only sporadically. Given Sickert's feelings about dilettantism, it is curious to reflect that he did more than most to encourage indolent dabbling. But compared with the overblown conventions of the painter-etchers, at least he fostered an unpretentious honesty of approach which bore, albeit delicate, fruit.

On aluminium wings

By Robin Buss

Light Years Away
Various cinemas

Alain Tanner's films are resolutely unitary and *Light Years* away perhaps supports better than any other the director's assertion that it is image rather than narrative which provides the starting-point for his work. It is, however, also the first film he has adapted from a novel (Daniel Odier's *La vole sauvage*). The plot, such as it is, concerns the relationship between a young man and his mentor, the owner of an abandoned garage on the West Coast of Ireland, and the narrative is episodic and if we believe at all in the wisdom of the old man, Yoshka, Pollakoff, our conviction is wavered more by the rugged and obstinate landscape of Trevor Howard's face than by the mystical platitudes which issue from it.

Yoshka has luckily been provided with an income which allows him to survive long after his garage has become obsolete and the only witnesses to his former business are a dry petrol pump and heaps of cars in various states of decay, the debris of an automotive civilisation. Here he has a series of pointless lectures, the pump, cleanliness and sorting the wreckage of the long-dead cars. In exchange for this work, he reluctantly allows Jones to share his food, and when Jones, rebelling against the intensity of his tasks, tries to intimidate himself with the "weakness" of Yoshka, he sends him back to life.

The task of Yoshka's, as it were, wisdom and Jones's yearning against

him, are seen as steps towards an understanding of the old man's closeness to the forces of nature, made only too explicit when he gets Jones to bury him up to the neck in the vegetable patch - apparently the only use to which that piece of ground is put. Yoshka, we are to understand, has not retired from a decaying civilization for the Voltairian purpose of cultivating his garden; his great secret, which Jones is ultimately permitted to share, is his desire to fly, like Icarus, but on aluminium wings. The implication is that man must relearn an intuitive rather than a rational approach to the world and the film's message is simply his striving after an imaginative and non-utilitarian ideal. But "man" for Tanner does not equal "humankind"; there is a strong element of misogyny, summed up by Yoshka when he says "women do not want me to fly". Neither he, nor the film offer any real support for this bleak assertion, which Jones comes to accept. The bird that finally escapes Yoshka down is an eagle.

However, it is not Tanner's intention to preach against the emptiness of urban life or the inhibiting effects of sexual relationships on the pursuit of an ideal. It is the image, not the message, that we are meant to retain. He constructs his myth with meticulous artistry, leading us from the apocryphal Irish environment of the city, with its pubs and yellow buses, to the desolate landscape of the Atlantic coast where he can seduce us into acceptance of the timeless value of the conviction which Trevor Howard and Mick Ford bring to their interpretation of the two main parts. By the scenery, the irruption of colour and violence against the background of green hills and watery skies. It is in these terms, not by virtue of its facile mysticism, that the film works.

The Ethics of Abortion

Sir, - It is gratifying that L. W. Sumner (Letters, December 4) had to resort to an argument from silence to respond to my observation that it is inappropriate to refer to an unborn child as a parasite. He says, "A parasite is an organism that lives on or in another and draws its nourishment therefrom" (*Siebold's Medical Dictionary*). The parasite need not be of a different species from the host." Dictionaries rarely waste space excluding conditions which obviously do not apply. Can Sumner name any organism studied by parasitologists that lives on or in a host of its own species?

The phrase "the burden of proof" may come from the law courts but surely the underlying principle does not. Sumner contends that the moral obligation on pro-abortionists to prove that unborn children are not truly human, lest they condone homicide, is negated by an alleged equal obligation on anti-abortionists to prove that unborn children are truly human, lest we wrongfully interfere with the autonomy of women. This position assumes that autonomy and human life itself are of equal value, and ignores the difference between the temporary nature of pregnancy and the permanent result of homicide. Sumner also ignores my analogy with heart transplants in which, discussing the surgeon's moral obligation to prove that the prospective donor had died before he removes the heart, I said, "Removing the heart prematurely would be wrong, even though the prospective recipient would die if he did not receive a new heart promptly."

A full discussion of the claim that not all members of *homo sapiens* have the same moral status would be beyond the scope of this correspondence. I shall just point out the danger which seems to have escaped the notice of Sumner by referring to history. Eugenists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wanted to create what Margaret Sanger, a prominent eugenicist, called "a race of thoroughbreds". This respectable racism, which labelled Jews, Slavs, blacks, and the mentally and physically handicapped "human weeds", prepared the way for the more drastic programme of eugenics put into effect by Hitler. If any members of the human species can be declared to be not truly human, none of us is safe.

MARTIN W. HELGENSEN,
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malvern,
New York 11565.

Johnson's Last Words

Sir, - Donald Greene has recently written (Letters, December 25) about the "Author, Author" Competition No 36 (for which you printed the answers on July 17) and uses the occasion to comment on the presumed last words of Samuel Johnson. The entire competition raises some interesting questions about the last words of famous people as well as about Johnson and Boswell.

The first quotation from Competition 36, "Give Dayrolles a chair", is readily identifiable as the last words of the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, Johnson's quondam patron. But did Chesterfield ever use those words? Our access to his first biographer Dr Matthew Gurney, whose *Memories of Lord Chesterfield* first appeared as the preface to Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works* (2 vols, 1777), was not present at Chesterfield's death. In his *Memories*, Gurney quotes the "last words" and then adds, "These were the last words he was heard to speak. They were characteristic and were remarked by the very able and attentive physician who was then in the room. His good breeding said that gentleman, only *quits him with his life*". In a note, Gurney says that the physician was "Dr. Warrore, physician to the king", presumably

Richard Warren, MD (1731-97). We do not know how reliable a witness Warren was, but his own comment about Chesterfield's good breeding would make sense only if the Earl were at the very point of death. In fact, as Maty says, Chesterfield died later that day. It is strange that Maty relied for the accuracy of this statement on Dr Warren and not on a Solomon Dayrolles himself, with whom he was well acquainted, and to whom Chesterfield actually spoke. "Give Dayrolles a chair" may be accurate, but it sounds doctored to me - a deathbed statement with an epigrammatic comment from a witness is decidedly unusual and hence slightly dubious.

Competition 56 continued with "This hath not offended the king", the last words of Sir Thomas More on the scaffold. All sixteenth-century accounts of More's execution agree that he did lift his long grey beard across the block so that the headsman's axe would not sever it, but More's biographers and family were not present on the scaffold or even at the execution (his daughter Margaret may have been in the crowd). More's sixteenth-century biographers - his son-in-law William Roper, Nicholas Harpfield, and "Ro. Ba." - mention various last words, but say nothing about this particular anecdote. Neither does Thomas Stapleton's Latin life (*Vita Thomae*, 1588). Not until the biography by More's grandson, Crescens More (Paris, 1637), do we find More saying anything about his beard and then, according to the grandson's account, he removed his beard from the block, saying, "That had never committed treason" (the *DNB* follows this account). "This hath not offended the king", with its unseemly archaism of the verb, seems to date from the more hagiographical lives of More that began to appear in the nineteenth century, but all the available evidence suggests that More himself said nothing of the kind.

Now we come to Johnson's supposed last words. The competition, as Donald Greene points out, followed Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, with "God bless you, my dear". John Hoole's account of Johnson's last days, which first appeared in 1799, and which G. B. Hill printed in *Johnsonian Miscellanies* (2 vols, 1897) and O. M. Brack, Jr from Hoole's manuscript in 1972, reduces that phrase to "God bless you" and adds that later Johnson "said something upon [a cup of milk] not being properly given into his hands". Sir John Hawkins added another version in his *Life* (1877), "*Qui moriturus*". There is still another account, which appears in the anonymous *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1786): "The next night he was at intervals delirious and in one of those fits, seeing a friend at the bedside, he exclaimed, 'What will that fellow ever have done talking poetry to me?' He recovered his senses before morning, but spoke little after this" (*The Early Biographies of Samuel Johnson*, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr and Robert B. Kelley, 1974, p. 241).

Donald Greene correctly points out that Boswell had a copy of Hoole's narrative about Johnson's last days and thinks that Boswell, since he chose to follow another account of Johnson's last words, is guilty of "falsification". Perhaps so. But the evidence does not point to word falsification. Greene says that Hoole's commentary is a "first-hand account". But it is not a first-hand account of Johnson's death; it is only a first-hand account of what Hoole of the morning of the day on which Johnson died (December 13, 1784). Hoole continues, "I left him in this state [ie, in a calm sleep or daze] and did never see him more alive". Hoole says that he learnt of Johnson's death, which happened eight hours later, around seven that evening, later that night.

Boswell's literary artistry aside, we know that he possessed a lawyer's training in dealing with evidence, so if he rejected Hoole's account of

Johnson's last words, he must have had reason to believe that he was not a trustworthy witness or that there was a better witness available. And, of course, Boswell knew that Hoole had not been present at Johnson's deathbed. His presentation of Johnson's last moments in the *Life* is especially careful. Donald Greene says that Boswell gives Johnson's statement to Miss Morris, "God bless you, my dear!" and that these were the last words he spoke. Actually, Boswell does not state anything at all. Instead, he writes, "Of his last moments, my brother, Thomas David [Boswell] (1748-1826), has furnished me with the following particulars", and then follows with the well-known account as a quotation from his brother, clearly identified as such in the text. The categorical statement, if that is what it is, by Boswell, it is by Boswell's brother. No contemporary witness mentions whether Thomas Boswell was also present at Johnson's deathbed; I doubt it. Perhaps Boswell had his brother gather these materials for him. But the fact that Boswell presents his account of Johnson's last moments through indirect statement, in the words of a neutral person, suggests that he recognized the problem of authenticity and the accuracy of witnesses and that other considerations - after all, Boswell wrote to be present at Johnson's bedside - prompted him to doubt the word of John Hoole, the version of Sir John Hawkins, and the story in the anonymous 1786 *Life*.

Of the three "last words" in Competition 56, then, I should say that those attributed to More are certainly false, those assigned to Chesterfield are highly unlikely, and Johnson's are most likely to be correct in the form that Boswell gave them. Boswell was sometimes inaccurate, as Donald Greene points out, but there is no evidence that he deliberately falsified Johnson's last words. Indeed, I would say that this exercise shows how well Boswell could deal with conflicting evidence.

PAUL J. KORSHIN,
Department of English, University
of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 19104.

Translating 'Beowulf'

Sir, - T. A. Shippey's review (January 1) of my attempt at translating *Beowulf* into French proves a useful mixture of praise and strictures and even suggests room for some beneficial alterations. For this I am grateful. However, it is all a shade out of perspective.

I was addressing French readers and clearly a literal rendering would have remained opaque, not to say meaningless, as I was at pains to point out to a longish introduction. The tone of the original work, too, had to be made amenable to French ears. I had therefore to depend on a more or less - transposed version in which the spirit of the book would not evaporate. Perhaps in this I could have been more personal - more of an interpreter.

Oo ooe polot, T. A. Shippey is both inaccurate and unfair. He quotes me as flouting "un peu puériles" my historical speculation about the poem. Now this was but an incidental remark regarding fairly remote matters, and thus unrelated to the overall Scandinavian English background which, granted limited space, I had thought, expounded in a tolerably comprehensive manner.

But not to end on a sour note, may I add that I find English and French literary cultures less far apart than he suggests. As an example of this, I would like to refer him to Dorothy Sayers who, has excellently introduced *Le Chant de Roland* to English readers. Admittedly, she did not have to ponder whether shades were more dignified than feet.

JEAN QUEVAL,
77850 Héricy, France.

Women and Pornography

Sir, - I read with much amusement the letters by Jane Aiken Hodge and J. A. Penrose (Letters, January 15) attacking your reviewers J. G. Weightman and Roger Scruton (January 1) for their, and indeed, the world's, "sexism". However, the smile faded from my face somewhat when I came to Jane Aiken Hodge's suggestion that you give "significant books about women to women for review". My impression is that this has already been the disastrous policy of the TLS for the past three years at least. One might as well ask a Kremlin bureaucrat to review significant books about Marxism, the holy and entertainment value of the result would be the same. I had hoped that the reviews by Weightman and Scruton were the beginning of a new editorial trend. Indeed, you might consider having significant books about women reviewed by individuals known for their antifeminism. This could have the joint benefit of giving your readers a more trenchant view of a hook they might be thinking of buying, and, secondly, some truly critical analysis of feminist ideology might result in an improvement in the quality of feminist writings. I admit that the latter possibility is remote, but as the red jackets used to say as they charged at the entrenched positions of the grim and humourless Boers, "I say, what sport!"

JACK BENSON,
Amerbachstrasse 80, CH 4057
Basel, Switzerland.

Trinity College, Oxford.

mentin the "irrelevant" - but let me hasten to add that I would be happy to see us go on record as opposing irrelevances, whether gender-laden or otherwise. What is the function of a basis of serious criticism, after all, if not to protect language against those who would misuse it?

JOEL CONARROE,
The Modern Language Association
of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New
York, NY 10011.

Thomas Jefferson

Sir, - Stephen Thernstrom (Letters, January 8), in his understandable zeal to point out my mistake in ascribing the United States Constitution, rather than the Declaration of Independence, to Jefferson, has been led, by a misplaced residual trust in my reliability, to implicate Donald Hall in my error. Had Mr Thernstrom's scholarly enthusiasm been strong enough to induce him to look at the work being reviewed before his premature critical censure, he would have seen that Donald Hall is blameless. Had I stuck closer to him I should not have exposed myself to Mr Thernstrom's reproaches.

ANTHONY QUINTON,
Trinity College, Oxford.

Codswallop

Sir, - I wonder, am I alone in finding many infelicities in the new edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*?

I use the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* for the purpose of checking the meanings of words; it seems to me often inadequate. I give only one example in detail, though I could offer more than half a dozen of the first thirty or so words that I looked up, which seems a high proportion.

The word: *Codswallop*. The *COD* defines it as "nonsense". That is both facile and incorrect. Chambers has it more accurately: "nonsense put forward as if serious or important". We are all familiar with the phrase "a load of old codswallop", meaning an untrue sort of story such as might be put forward by a Defendant in a criminal trial. Also, the *COD* gives only the spelling "codswallop", but surely the first spelling is "codswallop" and that of the Turks (which in-

cludes another map by Moll) goes up to 1711.

In an edition of Quarles's *Emblems* of 1723, Messrs Bettesworth, Batley and Cribbes of Peterborough, Row, in their announcement of "Books lately Published" need only one line to tell "Moll's Geography, Folio 24s." - so people knew all about Moll.

GEOFFREY ROBINSON,
19-21 Newbury Street, Whitechurch, Hampshire RG28 7LQ.

Some other words with unsatisfactory appendages in the *COD*, and at that, more common and simple words: Morsel, Mouthful, Bowl (in the game of bowls, with a really grotesque definition), Bias, Bitch, Oyster (as in oyster bacon), Banister, Newel, Coalhanger.

COLIN VINES,
43 Embercourt Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0LJ

Daniel Defoe

Sir, - May I add a "Bastianism" in connection with Peter Earle's review of F. Bastian's *Defoe's Early Life* (December 11) in which he discusses the pleasurable activity Bastian has enjoyed?

Defoe, well into the fashionable market for travel books and almanacs, must have known all about *Mr Moll*. And one might suppose the title of Defoe's famous novel *Moll Flanders* could have come from his reading an advertisement:

Books sold by Bell in Cornhill, and J. Doby in Bartholomew Close.

The History of Flanders, from its first establishment as a Principality, to the Death of the last K. of Spain. With Mr. Moll's Map of the Country.

Although I cannot establish the date this advertisement appeared (since the title page of the ancient volume in which it appears is missing), Bell and Darby, anxious to stress the up-to-date-ness of other histories in the same advertisement, stress that their *History of France* is taken up to 1702 and that of the Turks (which in-

cludes another map by Moll) goes up to 1711.

In an edition of Quarles's *Emblems* of 1723, Messrs Bettesworth, Batley and Cribbes of Peterborough, Row, in their announcement of "Books lately Published" need only one line to tell "Moll's Geography, Folio 24s." - so people knew all about Moll.

GEOFFREY ROBINSON,
19-21 Newbury Street, Whitechurch, Hampshire RG28 7LQ.

Matsumoto Seicho

Sir, - I was delighted to read James Melville's analysis of Japanese mystery fiction (October 30). However, it should be noted that the name of "the man who inherited the mantle of Edogawa Rampo" is not Matsumoto Seichi but, rather, Matsumoto Seichō. The confusion, I suspect, lies in the alternative reading of the character *chō* - which is *chū*.

For those readers who wish to find out more about this author and his prolific output, there is a pioneering article by Mamie Kameda, entitled "The Awkward Writer: Opinions about and the influence of Matsumoto Seichō", it was published in the Spring 1978 issue of *The Japan Interpreter*. I believe it is the only article of any length about Mr Matsumoto in English.

DAVID SALCEDO,
2749 Geranium Court, Fairfield,
California 94533.

Medieval Parliaments

Sir, - In his review of *The English Parliament in the Middle Ages* (December 18), E. B. Fryd has gravely misrepresented me. He says that in speaking of legislation "in the less tense and urgent atmosphere of the 1330s" I ignore the economic and social upheaval caused by the plague of 1348/9. Read in this context (p. 46), these words are quite plainly a description of relations between the king and the nobility, not of the state of England. For, as I have argued, it was precisely the apprehension of economic and social upheaval which produced harmony among the propertied classes in pre-

DAVID SALCEDO,
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liant during this decade, and facilitated the passage of legislation, including of course the Statute of Labourers.

Neither did I ignore the "mounting popular unrest" to which Fryd rightly sees legislation and taxation contributing in the 1370s. If he will read again my pages (pp 56-64) on the Good Parliament he will note the emphasis placed on the background of "unusual economic and social strain" and "popular discontent", and the argument that the Commons were at least partly prompted to attack misgovernment because this was "commonly recognised as provoking the turbulence of the peasantry and the mob which the landlord class feared beyond all".

G. L. HARRISS,
Magdalen College, Oxford.

Execution by Drowning

Sir, - In reviewing George Leggett's *The Chastet* (December 11), Robert Conquest appears to suggest that only "individuals" were drowned at Nante in the Year II whereas the Nantes disposed of "bargeloads" in their own rivers.

However, the evidence taken after the Nantes massacres makes clear that it was precisely in "bargeloads" that the victims of Carrier died. On December 23, 1793, for example, 800 persons were drowned in two large boats and in a later episode 300 died in a single vessel. Indeed, Jacques Godechot estimates that between 2,800 and 4,600 were executed at Nantes by this means alone during the repression which followed the defeat of the Vendém revolt.

Interestingly, Godechot concludes (like Ulliam on the Bolsheviks) that this excess of terror recruited support for the counter-revolution and made victory more difficult to achieve.

D. J. WALSH,
80 Ladbroke Grove, London W11.

We regret that in the notice of Richard S. Peterson's *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (December 11) the price of the book was wrongly stated. It is available from Yale University Press at £12.95.

Information, please

Sunday Freedom Association: current location of the archives of this organization or any information relating to the nineteenth-century popular, anti-sabbatarian organizations, the *Sunday Society* and the *National Sunday League*: for a book.

Laurence Marlow,
Social Science Department, South Bank Polytechnic, London SE1 0AA.

Patrick Barrington, author of *Songs of a Sub-Man* (1934): information sought about the author, and present copyright holder.

M. Paffard,
Education Department, University of Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG.

Frederick Sodley Brereton (1872-1957), writer of boys' books: whereabouts of archives, personal papers, letters and any information; id assist in a bibliography.

M. Wyatt,
33 Sturges Road, Wokingham, Berkshire.

John Drinkwater (1882-1937), English playwright: personal recollections sought from family and friends; also copies of letters or photographs.

Irene Edwards,
38 Sandhurst Road, Wokingham, Berkshire.

Kate O'Brien, Irish novelist: any personal recollections, letters, draft manuscripts, etc; for a bibliography.

Joseph Ambrose,
58 Upper Rathmines Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Ireland.

Ann Ward, eighteenth-century York printer: whereabouts of books printed by her; also letters and legal documents connected with her.

Suzanne Luchford,
Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism, School of English, University of Leeds, Leeds.

John Lodge Ellerton, author of *Triem-mot, an Opera* (about 1862) and *L. W. Handel*, author of *Triem-mot or Merle's Spell* (copyrighted 1873): whereabouts of copies for a study of Scott adaptations.

Kurt Gamserslag,
Engelsches Seminar der Universität Bonn, Regina-Palais Weg 5, 5300 Bonn, German Federal Republic.

Hyde Park House, Albert Cole, London, residence in the 1890s of Sir Herbert Searisbrick Naylor-Leyland, 1st Baronet: any information; photographs, sketches, accounts, etc; for a biographical sketch of Lady Naylor-Leyland.

F. X. Roelinger,
351 Elm Street, Oberlin, Ohio 44074.

Gilbert O. Thomas, author, poet and literary critic: any correspondence or personal recollections; to help create a possible Gilbert Thomas collection.

Ruth Johns,
4 Castle Close, Warwick CV34 4DB.

Ann Ward, eighteenth-century York printer: whereabouts of books printed by her; also letters and legal documents connected with her.

Suzanne Luchford,
Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism, School of English, University of Leeds, Leeds.

Among this week's contributors

FLEUR ACOCK's most recent volume of poems, *The Inner Harbour*, was published in 1979.

MICHAEL BANTON is Professor of Sociology at the University of Bristol. His books include *The Idea of Race*, 1977.

ROSALIND BELDEN's most recent novel is *Dreaming of Dead People*, 1979.

NICHOLAS BERT's novel *Where Were You at Waterloo?* was published last year.

VICTOR BROMBERG's most recent book is *The Romanist Prison*, 1978.

LEON CARVER was Chief of the Defence Staff from 1973-76. His most recent book is *The Apostles of Mobility*, 1979.

RICHARD COMAS is the editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Bulletin*.

WENNY COPE is one of the poets whose work is included in Faber's *Poetry Introduction Five*, 1981.

ALAN COREN is the editor of *Punch*.

DOUGLAS DUNN's most recent collection of poems is *St Kitt's Parliamint*, 1981.

JOHN L. FLOO is Deputy Director of the Institute of Germanic Studies at the University of London.

MICHAEL GRANT's books include *Latin Literature*, 1978, and *The Etruscans*, 1980.

PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH's biography of Havelock Ellis was published in 1980.

BRIAN HARRISON's books include *Drink and the Victorians: the Temperance Question in England, 1872-1915*, 1971.

F. W. J. HEMMING is Professor of French at the University of Leicester. His *Baudelaire the Damned* will be published shortly.

GRAHAM HOUER's books include *An Essay in Criticism*, 1973.

PETER KEATING is the author of *The Working Classes in Victorian Britain*, 1971, and editor of *Into Unknown Britain*, 1977.

JOHN KEOGAN's books include *The Face of Battle*, 1976.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published shortly.

COLIN MCGINN is a lecturer in Philosophy at University College London.

HELEN MCNEIL is a lecturer in English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

BRIAN MONTGOMERY is the author of *A Field-Marshal in the Family*, 1973.

BLAKE MORRISON is deputy literary editor of the *Observer*.

ADAM MORTON is the author of *Frames of Mind*, 1980.

ANORAW MOTON's long poem *Independence* was published in December.

GARRY O'CONNOR's biography of Ralph Richardson will be published next year.

JAY PARINI is the author of *Theodore Roethke: An American Romantic*, 1979.

J. H. PARRY is Professor of Maritime History at Harvard University.

SARA PEARL is working on a study of Ben Jonson.

NICK RÓOCH is a lecturer in Drama at the University of Manchester.

ALAN RYAN teaches politics at New College, Oxford.

A. N. RYAN is Reader in Modern History at the University of Liverpool. He is the general editor of the *Navy Records Society*.

S. SCHÖNBACH's most recent book is *William Shakespeare: Records and Images*, 1981.

Eros analysed

By Andrew Hislop

PETER LEHMAN and WILLIAM LUHR:
Blake Edwards
288pp. Ohio University Press.
£13.30. (Paperback, £6.30).
0 8214 0605 1

A director who ends a film (*The Great Race*) with a shot of the Eiffel Tower collapsing into a heap does invite the view that he is concerned with symbols of phallic failure. However, even after the sexual comedy 10, Blake Edwards may not spring to everyone's mind as a practitioner in the modern cinema of phallicism, perversion and libidinal confusion, and as an exponent not only of radical techniques in film narrative but also of innovative celluloid attitudes to sex. In *Blake Edwards*, Peter Lehman and William Luhr, with many interesting examples, much theoretical restraint, more than a little repetition and varied success, argue such a case.

For all but the most literal-minded they more than prove their point about the persistence in Edwards's oeuvre of a phallic presence which is often under threat. Gushing champagne bottles abound in poignant black and pop prematurely, as in *The Pink Panther* when Clouseau is attempting to make love to his wife. Inspector Dreyfus cuts his thumb off in his miniature guillotine cigar-cup in *A Shot in the Dark* and shoots his nose off in *The Return of the Pink Panther*. Clouseau risks mutilation when - having failed to tame the leather-clad, whip-wielding Tanya the Lotus-Eater with the admonition "I warn you, Tanya the Lotus, I am opposed to the women's lib" - he stumbles groin first into an electric fan. In *The Great Race*, Dr Fato's machines become progressively more phallic until he is propelled into the air with his "companion", Max, in a rocket-type contraption. In *Operation Petticoat*, Cary Grant's submariner is painted pink and five female nurses are smuggled on board. In the Western *Wild Rovers* a cowboy, Ross Bodine, treats his wounded friend Frank Post (what's in a name?) by plunging a red-hot knife into his leg. In *Happy Feet*, "Mitch" Mitchell, an ageing actor, accidentally breaks off a slender leg post while telling a woman in the bed that it would be inadvisable for them to have a physical relationship. And so on and so on. The book even contains a photograph of Edwards himself on set, finding the suggestively-shaped Pink Panther jewel.

Lehman and Luhr are equally convincing about the prevalence of transgression and voyeurism in Edwards's work. (Space does not allow another list.) *Operation Petticoat* provides a variation of transgression with a pig being ancessorally disguised as a man. The interplay of people watching and being watched is a common Edwards theme, but voyeurism is most explicit in *The Perfect Furlough* in which a group of men in an Arctic base try to satisfy their desires vicariously through pictures and by one of them taking a holiday with a film star; and in *10*, in which Dudley Moore is driven to obsessive pursuit by the sight of Bo Derek on her wedding day. The voyeuristic and the phallic even combine in *10* with Moore and his neighbour both directing telescopes at each other in search of erotic views, and such a combination has also a penetrative quality. In *The Pink Panther Strikes Back* when Inspector Dreyfus thrusts his periscope through the floor of Clouseau's flat.

The problem with such an approach is that it is at once dependent for its significance on a particular theory of the unconscious - psychoanalysis; and divorced from that theory by becoming a part of ordinary culture which has anyway found little immemorial allowed people consistently to make jokes about phallic-shaped objects. In the case of critical works, familiarity with such concepts may give readers the feeling

that they know what is being talked about but it also enables authors to avoid explaining exactly what they are saying. That a mishmash of Freud has seeped into our understanding makes it more necessary for them to spell out in detail what they think is the significance of concepts derived from Freud's work. That treacherous metaphor, the dust-jacket, promises us that Lehman and Luhr apply "recent psychoanalytical and feminist critical methods". The spectre of Lacan raises its theoretical head but the old showman of the Ecole Freudienne never materializes, nor indeed do any recent psychoanalytical or feminist theorists (if we discount a couple of passing references to Barthes and one to Stephen Heath). This no doubt makes *Blake Edwards* more comprehensible, and perhaps more enjoyable, but it does make the theoretical basis behind its assumptions open to question. Lacan may be incomprehensible and/or wrong but one cannot accuse him of acceptance of the signification of the phallus.

A simplistic view is that Edwards repeatedly uses symbols of phallic failure, etc. in his comedies because they are accepted, recognizable conventions which make people laugh. Lehman and Luhr are concerned less with castration as a vehicle for comedy than with comedy as means of tolerating castration and making more palatable what they see as a fundamental ideological position in Edwards's work, a refusal to celebrate the monogamous, heterosexual couple which has been so celebrated in the films. If not the life-styles, of Hollywood: "Edwards's inability to send his characters off in happy couple into the Clouseau films goes virtually unnoticed because of the comic form. In fact, it is the comic form that allows Clouseau almost literally to castrate himself." Indeed, Clouseau's near mutilations are less threatening than the unkind cuts found in the cinema of Oshima and Ferreri, and Inspector Dreyfus's powers of recuperation from injury in the previous film are most comforting. And, without going into details, there is no doubt that in many films Edwards eschews "happy couple" endings.

But to what extent are these tendencies, "ideologically" important? *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, though not overtly the most shocking of films, has been acclaimed by certain critics as a significantly influential Hollywood film in its treatment of sex, and even by the celebrated director of pornographic films, Raulo Metzger, who thinks that Edwards, or Mr Julio Andrews as he calls him, made the most influential movie in the area of breaking down old taboos and letting permissiveness come in. And that was *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. I don't think anybody realized what a giant step that picture represented. . . . It was his acceptance of the forbidden - that really made me do *Dirty Girls*.

Lehman and Luhr think that 10 "may have a similar and more profound impact on the 1980s". Their analysis of 10, however, though acute in many of its individual perceptions, does not justify such a pessimistic conclusion. They see the film as containing an overt expression of tendencies in Edwards's earlier work which had previously been confined to a "sub-textual" phallic symbols for comic effect - not only the totemic authors don't mention it) George's nose, which flares up in rubricated expansion from a bee-sting received while observing, uninvited, Jenny's wedding.

Furthermore, 10 achieved its success not through balancing voyeuristic indulgence with an overt critique of it, but despite this critique. (Even Godard's *Somme qui Peux* contains overtly voyeuristic scenes which are no less pleasurable/disturbing because they are located within a serious *exposé* of sexual ideology.) And that critique is neutralized by the comic role of the central figure, George. The unexpected achievement of the clown who, like

Images of immobility

By Nick Roddick

DAVID BORDWELL:
The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer
281pp. University of California Press, £17.50.
0 520 03987 4

In many ways, Carl-Theodor Dreyer is the acid test for the film buff in search of the correct cultural response: a director who is on the plus side foreign, dead and difficult and on the minus side, boring, rigidly formalistic and religiously inclined. He was never a prolific director. He made only eight films in Denmark and Germany between 1918 and 1925, and then, in just under forty years, directed the five features on which his international reputation rests: *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* in 1927, *Vampyr* in 1932, and thereafter one feature per decade - *Day of Wrath* (1943), *Ordet* (1954) and *Gertrud* (1964), each one more inaccessible than the last. Yet few serious critics would deny his importance. His films are regularly shown, other directors have paid direct or indirect homage to him (Godard and Michel Delahaye could exclaim in *Cahiers du Cinéma* that there is "no great film which does not go back to Dreyer, the crux of the modern cinema").

David Bordwell's *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer* is by no means the first book on the director, but it is by far the best. It is thorough, precise, eloquent, admirably docu-

mented and beautifully produced: almost every illustration is a frame enlargement rather than a still, and each one consistently appears on the same page as the reference to it in the text (a rare achievement in even the most lavish of film books).

Like the films about which he writes, Bordwell's account is both fascinating and somewhat difficult. Unlike previous critics, he does not try by verbal and intellectual sleight of hand to knock the awkward edges off Dreyer, or to find in his films some vague but triumphant spiritual unity. He takes as his premise their contradictions and ambivalences, noting the apparent gap between content and form (*Jeanne d'Arc*, for instance, is a religious film in which the religious message is unclear, *Vampyr* a horror story in which the plot is downright confusing: "What we must keep before us," writes Bordwell, "is the gap - not in order to resolve it, but to specify the conditions of its existence"). His main critical reference point is Russian Formalism, and in particular Victor Shklovsky, "the technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and process of perception because the process of perception is as aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object."

Analysing certain of Dreyer's early films and all his major features at considerable length, Bordwell brilliantly demonstrates the "artfulness" of the director's work, pointing out the terms in which the films operate and the demands they make on us. Above all, he notes their refusal to subordinate the procedures of cinematic expression beneath the overriding demands of storytelling; he finds in Dreyer's main films a "teleology of the shot" relatively free from narrative demands, in which strategies of camera movement, editing, lighting, grouping and even performance obey a series of laws and construct a network of meanings which run parallel, and occasionally counter, to the narrative. Put another way, Dreyer's films achieve "the subordination of the playing space to the total frame space", creating a world in which cinematic language frequently gives prominence to its own devices, avoiding that "terse acquiescence to the actors' behaviour" which characterizes the traditional (Hollywood) style.

What most distinguishes Bordwell's book, however, is the fact that it is a great deal more than an exhaustive study of a single director. Dreyer's work, he argues, "demands our attention because it poses important problems for the study of cinema as art, industry, and historical process": it "makes us do cinema differently". I am far from convinced that the book has much to tell us about the cinema as an industry, but it does combine in a rare way two frequently distinct strains of film criticism: authorial monographs, and theoretical discourses on film language. Bordwell is not content to assume that a film director is a complete artist whose aims and methods it is enough to describe, nor does he lose sight of the specifics of cinema in a complex and self-sufficient theoretical argument. What he does is to use Dreyer as a means of exploring the way in which cinema, and particularly certain elusive areas of film language, can have meaning over and above the straightforward and generally non-cinematic content of the narrative, and at the same time to test and define the resulting theoretical notions by meticulous and repeated examination of their practical operation.

The book is not without its weaknesses. Despite his overall eloquence - and certain unexpected flashes of humour - Bordwell is unable to resist flying the assertive flag of modern structuralist criticism from time to time: shots and sequences do not simply mean, they become "enriched with intelligibility". While characters find themselves mediating "between the dynamic heterogeneity of the film's motifs and the stability of an overarching causal structure". Likewise, it is occasionally difficult to avoid wondering, in an old-fashioned sort of way, whether such detailed but necessarily selective analysis could not have found the same (or similar) patterns in almost any group of films, and whether it was really Dreyer's intention that "the emptiness of *Gertrud* persistently seems to be a 'primarily negative, even domineering' meaning, or for that matter, to be "primarily negative, even domineering". Above all, the concluding chapter on "Dreyer's Uses" adopts, however guardedly, a version of the once fashionable but surely idealistic *Cahiers du Cinéma* position that, despite a consistently conservative standpoint, Dreyer's cinema is nonetheless radical because, through films, it points up the "gaps" and "dislocations" in the dominant ideology. Indeed, most of the last chapter, with its curious reference to Brecht and its own more curious claim that modern avant-garde film-makers such as Straub and Huillet "negate and surpass Dreyer's cinema of immobility", seems to force itself to a conclusion. The films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer need no such apologies for their existence; the analyses he conducts, and the areas of inquiry he illuminates, are enough to qualify the book as a major contribution to the literature of film theory and criticism.

The pelvis on the slab

By Blake Morrison

ALBERT GOLDMAN:
Elvis
598pp. Allen Lane. £9.95.
0 7139 1474 2

In the penultimate chapter comes the moment towards which Albert Goldman's massive book has been steadily building. Having spent nearly 600 pages demolishing Elvis Presley's reputation he is now finally allowed to describe the demolition of his body. Dead from an overdose, Presley lies on a stainless steel table in a morgue awaiting the autopsy that will reveal the presence in his body of no less than eleven different drugs - among them valium, codeine, morphine and three kinds of barbiturate. With a patience that smacks of masochistic delight, Goldman catalogues each step of the post-mortem: the "Y incision" from shoulders to pubic bone that allows the pathologist to pin back the skin; the sawing of the ribcage; the opening of the stomach; the slicing of each major organ. Lovingly he dwells on the stigma of dissolution: the skin "pitted with countless needle marks"; "the fat face swollen with gorged blood"; the enlarged heart, clogged arteries and the liver "so diseased it looked exactly like paté de foie gras". Then comes the climax:

"The scalp is cut and pulled both backwards over the nape of the neck and forward over the face to expose the surface of the skull. The entire top of the head is then cut off with a power saw, which sends puffs of dust into the atmosphere, against which the operators protect themselves by donning face masks. When the top of the skull is lifted off like a bowl, the brain beneath is examined and then scooped out for sampling and sectioning. . . . The three hour procedure terminates with the remains of the brain being put back inside the skull and the internal organs gathered in a bag and stuffed back inside the body cavity, which is then stitched up."

If we are reminded, here, of Dante's Count Ugolino, his jaw clamped to and festering on the brain of Archbishop Roger, this is appropriate, for as reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic have been quick to point out Goldman's is one of the most vengeful and cannibalistic biographies ever written. Posing as a coolly conducted post-mortem which will pick its way among the evidence so as to get at the truth of Elvis Presley's life, it's really more of a hatchet-job, never so happy as when it is cutting up, taking apart, laying into. Biographers are sometimes said to have a love-hate relationship with their subjects: Goldman is unusual in dispensing with the love element entirely, his animosity towards Presley tempered only by his even greater animosity towards Colonel Parker, Elvis's manager. In whose Machiavellian hands the King often seems a lowly insect. "The King is Dead, Long Live his Enemies" would seem to be the sentiment.

Goldman's antagonism, we now know, backfired on him: reviewers have derided his book; reading it, even the most resolute Elvis-haters have ended up feeling protective towards the victim. Yet Goldman has perhaps had an unduly hard time of it, however pleasant his book. It makes vivid and compelling reading. There are some excellent anecdotes: Presley flying his private plane from Memphis to Denver in order to buy some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches from a hotel that does a nice line in them. There is some useful research, too - on the influence of Presley on Memphis's WDIA radio station; on his performance in *Jailhouse Rock* and other films; and on his 1968 "Slager Special" television hipster slang ("rattin'"), "heavy", "cool", "sandwich" and "some - please - packages" and "some - herole", the book is written with zest, as on Elvis's attractiveness, for example: "he struck a chord in women all right: the unkillable cord", and Dickensian: (oh Elvis's ample

girl: it is "as though he has swallowed a watermelon". The musical judgments, too, are basically sound: Goldman is surely right to prefer Presley's early songs to his late, even if he carries this preference to extremes (he finds everything after Elvis's very first recordings in 1954 to be a falling off) and goes in for the fashionable post-modernist principle which decrees that the more parodistic a work of art is, the better (the early Presley, we're told, is "a marvellous mimic", is "essentially playful and parodistic", likes "caricature", "fantasy", "surrealism" and "burlesque"). All in all, it's a strong narrative and lively performance.

The narrative that follows these opening chapters is less spectacularly offensive, but maintains a quietly snoring tone. In Goldman's words, Presley's career is made to seem a monstrous realization of all that is most kitsch in American popular taste. "A silly little country boy" from a family of "rednecks" and "hillbillies", his mother a dominant and fantasizing extrovert, his father a spineless, greedy "dullard and dink", Elvis was a "weird" and isolated boy whose school career was one of "academic mediocrity". At the age of sixteen, however, he transformed himself into a "street punk", acquiring provocatively camp hairstyles and clothes: "The image precedes the talent, as it was destined likewise to outlive the talent". Learning to sing chiefly by imitating what he heard played on the radio, he struck lucky at a time when the search was on for "a white boy who could sing like a nigger".

Music, however, soon interested him less than films. "Frankie" to emulate the recently dead James Dean (or "Jimmy Dean" as Goldman insists on calling him), he was contracted to make a series of films and was rapidly "reduced to one of the ugliest and most repulsive presences on the American screen". Ruined by films and commercialism, Elvis suffered two further blows in the late-1950s: his conscription into the army (presented here as a ploy by Colonel Parker to endear him to the respectable and middle aged) and the death of his mother in 1959 (Elvis is seen clawing desperately to join her in the coffin). Now his private life began to degenerate: a "nervet", "orgiast", "masturbator" and "voyeur", he pursued a deeply infantile sex life, full of "pejorative parties" and "pecking fantasies with young girls. Presley, whom he lived with for several years before marrying, eventually divorced him and he toyed with the idea of having her lover assassinated. Publicly too, Elvis declined: as Goldman sees it, apart from a brief revival round the time of his Las Vegas comeback in 1969, the 1960s and 1970s were downhill all the way.

In his haste to attack Presley from all possible angles, Goldman seems occasionally to contradict himself. Elvis, we learn, is a "supreme narcissist" but is also "resolutely self-hating and self-castigating" and has "a great longing to have done with this terribly embarrassing subject of Me". Or he is described in January 1955 as "puritanical" and "upright about girls" but by May of the same year has commonly "three or four girls in his room at once" and "might resort to force" and "rape". Then again, it is hard to reconcile his "megalomania" (he is "a man who ruled by fear and intimidation") with passages that present him as the helpless pawn of the capital-crazed Colonel Parker. But Goldman carries all before him by virtue of the convenient dualism which posits the existence in Presley of "two sharply opposed selves", a theory Goldman buttresses by making much of the fact that Elvis had a twin brother who died at birth ("he had beside him a phantom double, a secret sharer").

Goldman's justification for his hostile treatment of Elvis is the existence of what he calls "the Presley myth". The phrase turns up on many occasions in the book and each time drives him to a kind of fury. Believing that there are still millions of fog-bound innocents who "can't see for the myth, he conceives of himself as a truth-bearer who must 'break the spell' of gullibility and misinformation. But the Presley myth is itself a myth, a licence for Goldman to be as scurrilous as he likes. There has, after all, been no shortage of gossip and slander about Presley over the last five years. Fifteen days before he died, three bodyguards who had recently been sacked by Presley settled the score by telling of "the other side" of his life: their book, *Elvis: What Happened*, which upset Presley and some say contributed to the depression which led to his death, is one. Goldman draws on heavily without acknowledging its partiality. And though many of the other books

What is it, then, that makes Elvis so offensive? In large part it is the graphic portrait of Presley's last years with which Goldman begins. Confined to the plush padded cell that is his bedroom ("the Cave of Morphine" as the author calls it), Elvis lies gorging himself with huge meals of bacon, sauerkraut and mash, imbibing vast quantities of drugs and entertaining himself with porno films. Lonely and lethargic, he rarely gives live performances any more and when he does has to be braced and bound so that his mighty paunch can be concealed. His picture reminds one of lines from some - please - packages of "I can't seem to stand on my own two feet". All I could do was stand paralyzed" - lugs supposedly testifying to the power of love but also having an ironic appteness to his late decline.

Elvis Presley: (top) the first ever photograph, reproduced in the book here reviewed; (middle) at twenty-one and on the brink of fame, and (bottom) what happened - both photographs reproduced in Elvis: What Happened? by Red West, Sonny West, Dave Hebler, as told to Steve Dunleavy (332pp. Bantam, 90p. 0 345 27433 4).

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have been eulogistic (*Elvis, We Love You Tender* and *Elvis, Portrait of a Friend*) or downright cranky (Hans Holzer's *Presley Speaks* sets out to prove the King's continued existence in "the world Beyond"), more than enough has appeared about the "other side" which Goldman claims to be the first to reveal. Even *Elvis - The Movie*, which draws a veil over the last years, showed many of the strains in Presley's relationships with his wife and entourage. One would have had to be living in a very remote part of the globe not to have got the message that Elvis's life was not what it seemed.

Yet Goldman is right in supposing that, familiar though we are with the excesses of rock musicians and singers to the point indeed where it is the "straights" like Cliff Richard who seem the oddballs, the case of Elvis Presley nonetheless has a special fascination. There can be few more extraordinary incidents, for example, than that which took place on December 21, 1970, when Presley sought and was granted a meeting with the then American President, Richard Nixon, in order to volunteer to become a fully-fledged federal narcotics agent. Goldman, as usual, misses the point: he gloats over Elvis's deceit and hypocrisy, over how, railing against drugs, immoral-

ity and communists, he delivered an "inspiring speech marked only by his incessant scratching and rubbing of his drug-inflamed face and neck" (how, incidentally, since it was a private meeting, can Goldman know this?). But there is no reason to suppose that Presley did not mean all he said about dealers, pushers, junkies and hippies and how they were ruining America. His hope was that by going to the highest office of the land he might be given the chance to reverse history and to create again the settled world of the 1950s in which he had prospered.

For Presley's tragedy was to become too closely identified with the decade in which his career began. The image he created for himself in the 1950s was broader and more astute than might be supposed. His pelvis-grating, knee-shaking act evoked an energy and restlessness that was going to have both social and sexual implications (the old order was going, the new promiscuity had arrived). But though Elvis enjoyed teasing and provoking on stage, he was upset at being called "obscene" and was careful not to push his act too far. He might be aggressive, threatening unspecified reprisals should anyone step on his blue suede shoes or try to take his girl ("You better not mess with the

US Male my friend"), but he also wanted to be thought of as sad and sensitive, a man who lived down the end of Lonely Street, who might be caught crying in the chapel, and who could suddenly pause in the middle of one of his songs and (to a crooning background accompaniment) start talking straight from the heart. Remarkably, he succeeded in bringing this combination off: the rebel, the hedonist, the self-made man, the big spender, the sensitive plant, the whimpering cuckold, the teddybear who is cuddly and sweet but who also (as the screaming fans acknowledged) gets taken to bed. Presley's version of the song "It's Now or Never" catches the tension nicely: the yawn of sexual passion ("My love can't wait") is muted by the languid and melodiousness of the singing voice.

With the coming of the 1960s Presley found it impossible to keep these various tensions in play. In private and in practice he subscribed to many of the values of the counter-culture: he bought a ranch to set up a commune; took drugs; became a devotee of occult religions; and having Priscilla to live with him, avoided as long as possible a conventional marriage and family ("Look at the typical American family scene", he railed, "Man walkin' around fartin'.

Women walkin' around scratchin'. Kids goin' around hollerin'. Hey, man, fuck that! I never did fit in that scene and I never will.") But his public image had become that of someone who, after a brief period of adolescent prick-kicking, had reconciled himself to the values of middle America. He let it be known that he detested the Beatles (though when he met them in secret he liked them), marijuana, political activism and all the other appendages of the Alternative. His songs, schmaltzy and sentimental, were now aimed at an older audience and he no longer gave live performances. In a decade dominated by groups rather than solo artists, he began to seem an anachronism: many of us who came late to him could not see what all the fuss had been about and put him in the same league of tediousness as Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. Going to see Nixon in 1970 to become a narc was not for Elvis a piece of hypocrisy, then, but the logical solution to his dilemma: it was to be his revenge on those who had put him on the rubbish-heap of history.

Goldman cannot see this because he is too caught up in the myth he wants to destroy. Instead he ventures that Elvis's problem was his "total incapacity to deal with reality". But

when have we ever expected musicians and singers to have a capacity for that? Behind this book lies the assumption that by showing Elvis's grasp on reality to be unsteady, and his life to be shabby, one will also be showing him to have been less of a singer; Goldman is appalled at the evidence of Presley's "mounting" power, while the man who was the object of all this adulation was steadily declining to the condition of a hapless wreck. But there is nothing surprising about this: Presley's recovery existed in a sphere untouched by the messes and vicissitudes of private life. Knowing about his love of guns or predilection for white pants cannot alter in the least the sound of "Heartbreak Hotel", "Blue Suede Shoes", "Hound Dog", "House Rock" and the rest, nor the desire of people to hear them. Elvis's place in musical history is questionable: he wrote no songs and played the guitar badly; other of his contemporaries have finer voices and recorded better versions of his hits. Harsh things might be said, then, but Goldman vents his spleen in the wrong place, on the suffering man rather than on the artist, and at the end of his book Elvis Presley's reputation is as secure as ever.

vance, and indeed that is how Colette seemed to regard her.

Colette's own behaviour was irresponsible, for example in her dalliance with de Jouvenel's son and in her later liaison with the much younger Maurice Coudekerque who, much to her relief, finally agreed to marry her. She always took it for granted that she would have to work hard, whether as a writer or an actress or a journalist, but she seemed to lack any real practical acumen to look after herself. She emerged broke from each of her marriages and could never save any money. Her venture into a beauty clinic in her later years was a disaster. But she was a *débâtelde*, and she was fortunate to have a genuine gift for writing.

Emotionally, she drifted with the tide. Like all her heroines she swooned into love. Her life was a pattern of subject surrender to the men she loved. She had charm and she knew how to exert it, but this is something far different from the independent character with which her biographer tries to invest her. Ms Tarde struggles hard to have her efforts to portray Colette as a feminist, but the real Colette manages to elude her.

Possibly, but while Colette seems to have been truly pan-sexual, above all she needed a protector to the old-fashioned, bourgeois way of which her mother would have approved. Henri de Jouvenel had a title, a position as editor-in-chief of *Le Matin*, and was willing to marry her. Again she allowed herself to slip into subservience, tolerance her husband's flagrant infidelity. Ms Tarde treats the birth of her daughter as something of an irrele-

Rural unrealities

By Kim Taplin

HAROLD GASTER:
A Marrying Without Clouds
144pp. Cape. £5.50.
0 224 01964 3

The cloudless morning is Harold Gaster's Sussex childhood, seventy years ago. This miscellany of reminiscences and opinions, connected only by the author's largely undifferentiated emotion concerning "the passing of that old rural life", is another morsel to appease the current appetite for books about the countryside.

There is a number of objections to be raised to the present volume. First, the naivety of the small boy who watched volunteers drilling on the green and "was never quite sure whether it was a show or what it was" is still too evident. Even straightforward autobiography could hardly ignore the implications of the clouds that were gathering. Second, rural labour: idealized. As Orwell pointed out, at that period "most middle-class boys grew up within sight of a farm, and naturally it was the picturesque side of farm life that appealed to them". Unless he is likely to do it himself, a boy is not likely to notice the "horrible drudgery". Gaster commends Hardy to our attention. Readers of Hardy will be aware that Gaster's

morning was Hardy's afternoon and may make unfavourable comparisons between Tess's grim toil on the thrashing machine and the idyllic account presented here, where the labourers seem to be engaged in a pageant for the young gentleman's pleasure, rather than working. Hardy knew that rural life was Flintcomb-Ash as well as Talbothays. Third, Gaster is so carried away by the notion that he is recording what was as if he never saw that he writes, as if for Martians, describing "bulrushes in the same nostalgic terms as obsolete household utensils".

Gaster hopes to pre-empt criticism of his style by stressing that, as a painter, he is not equipped to construct a story or plot. Concerned to celebrate craftsmanship, he slightes the craft of writing by ignoring its rudimentary skills, falling closely enough at his subject to avoid cliché, repeating himself (criminally described almost identically three times within a few pages), creating no kind of shape.

"May I not speak of mysticism and symbolism?" asks Gaster out of the blue. The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, in common with many mystics, held that on had much better not use "symbolism", which needs pretty sharp definition, gets none. To appropriate the name is to be licensed to write. Gaster makes bold with both *Yahweh* and the book of *Samael* as epigraphs to these "random notes and sketches" and I'm afraid the liberty is never justified.

AMERICAN POETRY

In the line of the image

By Helen McNeill

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80pp. Yale University Press. £6.95 (paperback, £3.45).
0 300 02644 7

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Yellow Stars and Ice
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268pp. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press. \$7.50.
0 87685 501 X

These five collections show the extent to which American poetry is still reckoning with the consequences of a decision Ezra Pound made back in 1913. Pound declared that the best way for an American to write poetry in English was to concentrate on the image, to abjure symbolism, and let rhetoric and form follow after. Although Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost found other ways, Pound's solution was to prove the most easily digestible. If Robert Lowell holds little interest for young or American poets, it is not because of Lowell's effort to connect personal and public histories, but because of the mimetic model he used for his diction after *Life Studies*. Today the mainstream is elsewhere, in the post-Poundian line of the image, which has provided American poetry with its sharp to middle length poetry of quotidian sensibility since the 1950s.

Since the line of the image is not associated with any single contemporary master, and since it has absorbed apparently disparate aspects of the work of Pound and William Carlos Williams, Surrealism and French Symbolism, it influences American poetry by consensus. According to the poetry magazine *Field*, "a pre-occupation with the image has been one of the leading characteristics of contemporary poetry for at least twenty years". *Field*'s recent symposium on the image asked poets to answer fifteen questions, such as: "Do you use, in talking about poetry, your own or the of others, terms like 'Deep Image', 'surreal image' and the like?" One way or another, it is the tradition of the image which young American poets must accommodate or reject.

John Bensus, in *Green Saldiers*, seeks to combine sensibility, narrative, and history within the formal constraints of this tradition. Bensus's short, moving, stories of departure, loss and death are told in a powerfully declarative present tense. "Young Woman at Athens, 1914" follows the associative movement of the girl's mind while she gazes at an oak tree with "thousands of dark birds"; her soldier lover departs, fading into the last image she will have of him:

"This morning there is ice in all the trees. She looks again at the bridge, the soldiers. Here is just a boy, a hand waving, a bright spoon going off in the distance."

Many of Bensus's poems close with a sudden shift or reiteration of the image. In a thirty to forty-line poem these firm endings tend to shut down those associative processes which Bensus's narratives encourage.

"My Ear to the Chest of the World", the programmatic poem that begins Susan Stewart's *Yellow Stars and Ice*, asserts the allusion of the poet listening to nature. When Stewart writes, "What a life my body will carry on without me!" she is referring to the world's body, not to a quality

in herself. The other poems in *Yellow Stars and Ice* preserve this vision, celebrating the "true miracle" of natural processes. In "How the River Climbed Into this Poem":

It is raining in great sobs and single tears in the night shift's restless sleep, through the haze of tomorrow afternoon and the languorous plenies of July. And then, as if a baton had been lifted and not at all like lightning or thunder, it stops as soon as it's begun. Occasionally, there is an over-enthusiastic celebrating of the ordinary. This is as astonishing as orange juice. And certain poems ask us to notice how effective they are: "The dead man stands behind you, terrified / by this poem"; "I step back suddenly . . . at the sight of this poem".

Stewart's small, traditional vocabulary of images gives her collection a cumulative lyricism greater than the impact of any single poem. Several of the finest pieces, "The Doves Are Swallowing Hard", "The Exact Middle of the Night" and "Four Questions Regarding the Dreams of Animals" - take specific instances of nature imagery and move from observation to dream and back again; the effect is of masquerade serenity.

J. D. McClatchy's *Scenes from Another Life* has the perceptiveness, the prosodic range, and the syntactic sophistication of major poetry, though McClatchy's brilliant manoeuvres don't always bring his subjects to life, particularly in the weaker poems towards the end of the volume. An unreconstructed Stevensian, McClatchy grants the "other life" of imagination a reality

and validity of its own, while he acknowledges the mainstream by devoting a number of poems to transformations of the local. In "Feetish", which opens the collection, the symbolic object, or fetish, is itself the muse, a "figure" whose presence gives "the power to answer outcry with insight".

McClatchy addresses himself to one of the most intractable problems in recent poetry: how to achieve the breadth of connotative meaning possible to symbolism, without committing the poem to an ideology of transcendence. McClatchy is bent on reclaiming territory for symbolic metaphor. In the attempt to do this he often produces an over-elevated poetic diction: "The evening's turns and mordents", "the sky's lucid farewells", "fate's maternal fire", "humming forger / Of the literal abstract". In the triumphant "A Winter without Snow", however, McClatchy sets up a debate between the ghosts of Emerson and Stevens. The nineteenth century left new "drifts", now, in snowless New Haven, everyone proudly praises ordinariness:

Down here, the plain terces of provocation. This placket snow-fence peeling, gritty. Hiding nothing back, nothing in, nothing at all.

McClatchy remarks ironically that the current preference for the "raw material of everyday" in poetry makes today's palace of art look like a "pre-fab house", "way out on the Sun Belt". But McClatchy uses the analogy to take flight as the poet's ordinary house is transformed into "a world of possibilities".

So many of John Ashbery's

new poem called "If", then "we must live through it".

Warren began his career as the youngest member of the Fugitives, a disciple of John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate. His early work was well-wrought, intellectually acute, witty and balanced. The technical virtuosity of such work was beyond reproach, although in retrospect it appears somewhat static and imitative. The best poetry of Warren's middle period was the verse play called *Brother to Dragons* (1953), which he has recently seen fit to revise. Here Warren's liking for narrative, previously confined to the novel, had the effect of releasing raw energy like adrenalin into the bloodstream of his poetry. However, it was not until Warren virtually abandoned novel-writing in the early 1970s that he was able to tap the same energy again. The poems that followed, though hardly unpolished

Robert Penn Warren has stepped out boldly as a major poet, publishing four strong books of new verse in seven years. *Now and Then* (1978) established his position by astonishing readers with its ferocity and grandeur, and that memorable volume *Belong Here* (1980) or his latest collection *Rumor Verified*. Nevertheless, these last three collections are of a piece, and Warren has emerged at the front of a field noticeably lacking in major figures since the death of Robert Lowell.

At the age of seventy-six, Warren seems literally pressed by time. This pressure has led to what some critics regard as over-production, and some of these poems do read like rough drafts. In a sense, we have been given entry to Warren's workshop; the poet tries out the same poem many different ways, narrowing in on the final version, which is usually stunning. A fair number of these works take the form of the descriptive poem in which a (presumably) older man climbs a hill in Vermont or stands overlooking a seascape, having come to a specific point and place in nature, whereupon he is overwhelmed by questions of time and identity.

Even Warren's worst poems are interesting for the way they grope towards the better work, struggling for clarification. In the best of them, such as "Heart of Autumn" in *Now and Then*, "Acquaintance with Time in Early Autumn" in *Belong Here*, or "Mountain Mystery" in *Rumor Verified*, Warren makes us vividly aware of ourselves as creatures caught in the thread of time. He sees the need to ask the right questions even while he dangles before us the insufficiency of any answers we might obtain. "If this is the way it is", he writes in a

idiosyncrasy crop up in Douglas Crase's *The Revisionist* that Crase's topographical, hortatory and even nationalist address to the reader comes as a sharp surprise. The powerful and witty title-poem addresses an America which Crase wants to "revise".

What I am after to remember is not what was. And what I am anxious to save is not the same. For in the moment I saw you, you were changed.

The tone of "The Revisionist" varies eccentrically but convincingly between ecological indictment, descriptive natural history, high-cultural whimsy, and the criticism of Hart Crane's *The Bridge*. "I've wondered to find you waiting there tethered / and dreaming." In another long poem, "Six Floors in New York State", Crase meditates upon landscape and character, shifting skilfully from philosophy to sensation to memory. Crase's poems take their strong visual sense from nineteenth and twentieth-century American art, with Jackson Pollock's "Blue Poles" seen as "seismic totems" of the continent. Crase's parodic homage to William Cullen Bryant (and to Ashbery) in "To a Watertower" makes another link between the topographical, the nationalist, and the aesthetic. Yet Crase is least convincing when he most resembles Ashbery. His fondness for first lines referring to "it" and "things" indicates an Ashbery-like fastidiousness about naming the object too soon. But the technique is over-used to the point of mannerism. Crase is the unusual case of a contemporary poet whose most public, expansive voice is his most authentic.

In Gilbert Sorrentino's 1971 novel

employing the theory that something that is often becomes less so if it is made formally repetitious; and also by polluting the cliché with the addition of out-of-place adjectives. This came from his misunderstanding of Lorca, and Lou was not alone in his ignorance. A National Book Award winner of recent times has achieved his reputation by conscientiously making himself into Lorca with a crenob.

In his *Selected Poems 1958-1980*, Sorrentino struggles to keep his distance from what he calls the "floating cliché" of the consensus tradition and seeks to preserve an avant-garde, bohemian stance against the corn-cobbing academic imitators of true art. But like Robert Bly, Louis Simpson, Robert Pack or any number of mainstream poets whom he may be presumed to loathe, Sorrentino assumes an absolute validity for ordinary reality, arrogates special prerogatives to poets for being poets, and writes in a style which includes allusions in foreign languages, imagery and slang. Characteristically, the title of Sorrentino's "Twelve Etudes for Voice and Kazoo" seeks to impress its audience with both knowledge and disarming modesty. Sorrentino is merely disputing the modernist inheritance rather than creating one of his own.

possess a raw-boned, jagged quality. Power is the word that comes to mind when reading these poems, which have something in common with the work of the great poets of vitality - Whitman, Hopkins and Lawrence. Here, for example, is the opening of "Glimpses of Seasons":

Gasp-glory of gold light of dawn on gold maple -
Now forgotten green bough-loop, leaf-leaved droop, and even
The first reddening rindure of August or
The birth of the grape's yearning bulge, as summer,
Bemused in the dream of the sweetness of swelling,
Forgets to define
The mathematics of Time.

In his later work, Warren has rescued many of the virtues found in his early poems: wit, a muscular intellect, and a longing to get rapidly to

the heart of things. He has added a clamorous urgency, on intensity occasioned by age, and a turn to what might be called autobiographical verse. The road was opened for him by Lowell, Snodgrass, and others, who made confessional poems respectable. Yet Warren has gone beyond confession, reaching through mere personal fact to impersonal truth; he has taken on the mantle of the vatic poet and turned his own life into an exemplar. The lyric "I" in these poems is simply man at his best: simple, learned, loving, and completely human. This man, faced with "the terror / Of knowledge" in the title poem, asks: "But what can you do?" Warren answers: "Perhaps pray to God for strength to face the verification / That you are simply a man, with a man's dead reckoning, nothing more."

A genuine humility informs these poems and saves them from pretentiousness. And Warren's predilection for grand philosophical speculation is held in check by the autobiographical mode, which insists that each poem be founded on an incident or place. Thus, having evoked his climb up a seawall beside the Mediterranean, the poet can get away with talk about "the agony of time". We can absorb his question - "What lies in the turn of the season to fear?" in a poem called "Vermont Ballad: Change of Season" because he has rendered so concretely the transformations of autumn, the "fifteen rain" which has "wrought a new traceries / New quirks, new love-knots, down the pane". Indeed, the title poem, "Rumor Verified", is an ode to humility, a poignant confession of moral inadequacy.

In an exact and haunting lyric "What Voice at Moth-Hour", Warren asks:

What voice did I hear as I wandered
In a premature night of cedar, beech, oak,
Each foot set soft, then all as stone
[Standing to wait while the first owl spoke?]

Stricken with knowledge and the burden of history, Warren is besieged by voices that demand his attention and ours as well.

Ian Kendrick

and the burden of history, Warren is besieged by voices that demand his attention and ours as well.

Expressing suppression Signalling surrender

By Garry O'Connor

KENNETH BARROW:

Flora
An appreciation of the life and work of Dame Flora Robson
242pp. Heinemann. £12.50.
0 434 04775 9

Flora Robson, at five feet eight and a half, was unusually tall for an actress. Tentative rather than bold, of uneven features, she lacked social grace and dressed in a homely style. Her brother, David, repeatedly told her she was ugly. But her childhood, first in South Shields, later in Palmers Green, London, was happy, while her father, a sea-going Second Engineer, encouraged her to take lessons in singing, ballet and piano, as well as elocution, and taught her, according to Kenneth Barrow, "the importance of success".

Later, stimulated by her father's ambition for her to become the next Ellen Terry, Flora Robson went to RADA. She was bitterly disappointed to win only the bronze medal. Her career began indecisively and soon ground to a halt. She became a welfare officer at the Welgar Shredded Wheat factory in Welwyn Garden City, where she brooded on the emptiness of her life.

On coming back to the stage as the step-daughter in *Sir Charles in Search of an Author*, she met up with Tyrone Guthrie, whom she'd known before and once visited on his estate near Monaghan. While they were in a production together, Guthrie proposed to her after a row, and Flora rashly mentioned she'd like a family lots of children and then retire from the stage to bring them up. Guthrie quietly let the engagement drop. He didn't see children in his firmament, or other stars for that matter. He married his cousin instead.

Rather quickly, Flora became famous. Her first big success was as Mary Palerson in James Bridie's *The Apollonists*. Thoughts of marriage were left behind as she took to heart the advice of her fellow actor in that production, Carleton Hobbs: "You are wicked not to be happy and grateful when you have found fame at last." Soon she was to play Eva in *Mughams' For Services Rendered* which entered as the archetypal "Flora Robson" part of a woman approaching forty, plump, unmarried, subject to hysterical grief, then insanity. Flora came to epitomize a whole generation of superlative women who, because of the dead in the First World War, had lost hope of marriage. But she branched out into politics and murderesses, sometimes

combining the two, and, later, into wonderful old ladies.

By now any gleam of unknown but intrinsic possibility in the story vanishes as the press cuttings about Kenneth Barrow's indiscriminate servings from it get fatter. We drown in citations, sometimes six or seven to a page, about Flora's artistic brilliance. Some are not bad: "It was the voice that Garbo lacked" (Helen Hayes). Others are tiresome - "That is a STAR!" (Michael Redgrave). As a whole they blur rather than clarify her actual quality.

It's something of a surprise to find that this is a second "authorized" book about Flora Robson. The first, by Janet Dunbar, was published in 1960. Stage artists' early days often supply backgrounds more colourful than do Hollywood or Shaftesbury Avenue. Ban Green's touring company, The Cambridge Festival Theatre, the Oxford Repertory of 1924, all of these are described in greater detail by Dunbar, presumably because in Dame Flora's memory of 1960 they were fresher. Shaw came to a performance at Oxford of *Heartbreak House*, in which she played Nurse Guinness. According to Dunbar, "He went on to the stage, and said he was very reluctant to make a speech because he had thought the play was terrible . . . none of the actors got near the characters. . . . Very soon they were repeating his [Shaw's] insults as if they had been compliments." Barrow's account, by seeking both to excuse the performance and to avoid stating Shaw's actual response, becomes a muddle.

Printed in disconcerting italics at intervals in the new book are many of Dame Flora's own recent recollections. These suggest a modesty and an engaging plainness which if they do not by themselves generate great interest, at least spare one temporarily the endless drumbeat of newspaper cuttings. Barrow goes so far as to suggest that it was Kenneth Tynan - nowhere quoted but "whose antipathy to Flora had been obvious for several years" who killed off her career to the 1960s. But while she was asked to play at the National Theatre, neither is there evidence to suggest she was asked much by Tynan's or by anyone else. The career slump then has been slight. "Most Beautiful Evenings", Barrow heads this chapter. Dame Flora retired in 1970 and will be eighty next March. It might have been worthwhile to explore more this enforced early retirement, for others of Dame Flora's vintage went on working well beyond 1970, and still continue. Not only for the personal reasons of which no attempt is allowed, but for the wider cause of changing fashion. Dame Flora's understanding impersonations of tortured spinsters no longer fitted. Anger and explicitness were in. Suppression of any kind was out. So were beautiful warm voices.

By Phyllis Grosskurth

MICHELLE SARDE:

Colette
Free and Fattered
Translated by Richard Miller
479pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95.
0 7181 2058 2

In this highly rhapsodic biography, Michelle Sarde seems intent on emphasizing Colette's vital, earthy qualities as the essential woman. Her stability is attributed to her provincial mother, with her comforting, fiercely loving nature.

She was to provide her daughter with the model of a woman proud to be a woman, a woman who loved others because she had begun by loving herself. No small gift. The gift of equilibrium, of solidity, of "normality" in the last conformation, least of all, a gift always suspect to those fascinated by the lower depths, by spiritual and mental imbalance.

"A woman proud to be a woman" sounds splendid, but does it actually conform to the facts of Colette's life? Marriage seemed the only honourable fate for a girl, and at sixteen Sidoine Gabrielle Colette was married off to Henri Gautier-Villars - "Willy" - some thirteen years her senior, already the father of an illegitimate child, a man of sundry affairs, financial and amoral. The facts seem to suggest that Colette's mother, turning a blind eye to his peccadilloes, laid at the chance to marry her daughter off to a well-known Paris music critic.

How much she knew about the egregious Willy's stable of backs who turned out novels for him by the piece is impossible to know. Ms Sarde maintains that Colette bid Sidoine the extraordinary story of her own initiation into novel-writing. Willy suggested that she write down her recollections of her school days, at first rejected them, and later recognized their financial potential. As a *scout* of salaciousness was added - by himself. He then published them under his own name.

He turned Colette into a slavey, shutting her in a room to churn out so many pages a day of Claudine's adventures. What is astounding is Colette's compliance. Her youth, inexperience and dependence might be pleaded in extenuation, but as the years rolled by she allowed herself to be paraded around Paris as a twin to Polaire, the actress who played the stage Claudine and who was probably among Willy's string of mistresses.

Willy finally threw Colette out for an even younger woman, and she found herself in the ignominious position of discarded wife in a ground-floor flat. But it was this period of Colette's life when, embittered by the perfidy of

men, she turned to women for solace, that Ms Tarde clearly thinks was the most fulfilling. In the relaxed atmosphere of the *Belle Epoque* Sapphism flourished. Men regarded it with amusement or tolerance, possibly an exciting little sexual vice from which they could profit. But according to Ms Sarde, women who preferred woman became ultra-feminine:

Only another woman can restore the verdant paradise represented by the mother's body. To Colette - and particularly during this period - the male represented otherness, separateness, jealousy, suffering, slavery, emotional alienation; the female was relationship, contact, fidelity, independence, emotional harmony.

Possibly, but while Colette seems to have been truly pan-sexual, above all she needed a protector to the old-fashioned, bourgeois way of which her mother would have approved. Henri de Jouvenel had a title, a position as editor-in-chief of *Le Matin*, and was willing to marry her. Again she allowed herself to slip into subservience, tolerance her husband's flagrant infidelity. Ms Sarde treats the birth of her daughter as something of an irrele-

ment, and indeed that is how Colette seemed to regard her.

Colette's own behaviour was irresponsible, for example in her dalliance with de Jouvenel's son and in her later liaison with the much younger Maurice Coudekerque who, much to her relief, finally agreed to marry her. She always took it for granted that she would have to work hard, whether as a writer or an actress or a journalist, but she seemed to lack any real practical acumen to look after herself. She emerged broke from each of her marriages and could never save any money. Her venture into a beauty clinic in her later years was a disaster. But she was a *débâtelde*, and she was fortunate to have a genuine gift for writing.

Emotionally, she drifted with the tide. Like all her heroines she swooned into love. Her life was a pattern of subject surrender to the men she loved. She had charm and she knew how to exert it, but this is something far different from the independent character with which her biographer tries to invest her. Ms Tarde struggles hard to have her efforts to portray Colette as a feminist, but the real Colette manages to elude her.

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Importing a modern tradition

By Fleur Adcock

JOHN FORBES:
Stall's Holidays
51pp. Gleebe, New South Wales:
Transit Poetry.
0 959437 0 3

DAVID MALOUF:
First Things Last
56pp. Chatto and Windus. £4.75.
0 7011 2562 4

GRACE PERRY:
Snow to Summer
80pp. Berrima, New South Wales:
Smith Head Press
0 909185 02 6

R. F. BRISSENDEN:
The Whale in Darkness
71pp. European. £6.95.
0 7081 1083 5

WILLIAM GRONO and
NICIOLAS HASLICK:
On the Edge
77pp. Claremont, Western Australia:
Freshwater Bay Press.
0 908215 01 0

Australian poetry has been vainly on the move since 1968, when a group of young writers responded to the events of that year by initiating a rebellion against the poetic establishment. Like many revolutionaries they were armed with imported weapons: their anger and idealism were expressed in styles borrowed from older American contemporaries such as Ginsberg, Snyder, Ashbery and Frank O'Hara. Australian poetry needed to be shaken up, and no doubt this was as good a way as any of setting in motion a process which is still taking place: the country's literary magazines crackle with irony and dissent, as the proponents of the "New Poetry" subdivide into warring factions and are accused by more conservative writers of being not so much "modern" as merely the victims of another kind of colonialism.

But it is not only the "Generation of '68", in their by now rather faded uniform of ampersands, oblique strokes and lower case, who have learned from the Americans. An American flavour pervades a much wider area of Australian poetry, with even the "traditionalists" now tending to be traditional in ways derived from American models. The results

vary according to the originality and flexibility of the individual poets; the range of styles is considerable.

John Forbes, born in 1950, belongs to the extreme "avant-garde" end of the spectrum. He writes with a wild eclectic energy, his ideas and images jumping explosively in all directions. The effect can be exhausting, propelling the reader breathlessly forward with no time to notice anything but the immediate scenery (which tends to be Australian, polished and urban when it isn't merely a surrealistic blur). The few poems which stand still long enough to have subjects include one on the once-fashionable topic of drugs, which reads however like an amusing and relatively detached foretelling to them, and several reflections on art and poetry: "Everything depends on the context" / I consoled the revolutionary / dying behind / the red wheelbarrow section / of our barricade.

Forbes makes few concessions to his readers: many of his poems are nonsense until one reads them a second or a third time; some remain nonsense. Not a great deal of this clever, frothy, idiosyncratic stuff justifies the effort required to extract meaning from it, but every now and then a touch of grace or brilliance makes it seem briefly worthwhile.

David Malouf is a more mature poet, and a more accessible one; his long looping sentences twining over their line-endings need to be followed carefully, but he is no exhibitionist: the techniques he has learnt are subordinated to the poems themselves. He has a strong visual consciousness with a sense of joyful absorption in the natural world which makes the overworked word "celebration" irresistible. The first poem in this collection is about lemon trees gone wild, and the second about a garden. The image of Eden recurs throughout the book, as garden or wilderness or as landscape remembered from the past in a fine long poem, "Deception Bay". He reconstructs the surroundings of his childhood by a series of conscious acts of will shared with his readers.

The Paradise-garden theme is carried through into his poems about music. "An die Musik" begins "We might have known it always music / is the landscape we move through in our dreams . . ." and notes on a stave become growing plants. "So then, play your beautiful / Vivaldi's Gloria and see the thin pods swell, miraculous and many / as the mouths

of Hosannah." The whole poem is rich in such transformations: . . . and passion-flowers / incline their busy flywheels to the sun, spinning a line of melody that modulates from yellow to green as in mirror fugues and counter-clockwise through the year.

One of Malouf's concerns is with the relations between reality and seeming: "Across the lake the small houses appear / to be real, or to imagine themselves somehow / painted on the view and leaning towards / their shaky selves in water . . ." Another preoccupation is time, the interfusion of the present and the past. In an elegy for his father he writes of the dead being buried in the living and looking out through their eyes, as does the not yet born. The concept occurs again in "Deception Bay": "Innocence / we call it, condescending / as so often to our forebears, / whose eyes look too clearly / through us to what lies / ahead." Then there is his reiterated use of the word "blue", not only for sky and sea and shadow on the land but as a personal symbol, almost a verbal tic. It is the Indigo of the "blue, majestic" - he lovingly pursues in "The Crab Feast", in order to eat them, incorporate them and become one with them. The process of achieving a symbiotic harmony with the natural world is also at the centre of his novel, *An Imaginary Life*, which like many of these poems looks back to a prelapsarian mode of existence.

Malouf's powerful imagination allows a certain amount of surrealism, without too much self-indulgence. He uses a variety of free verse forms, including prose-poetry, while retaining a commitment to normal syntax. He can be playful, and his obsession with the visual sometimes carries him away into digressions, but he is a serious poet concerned with serious things.

The blurb of Grace Perry's book states that she was the first among her generation of Australian poets (she was born in 1927) to "open up her writing to an international style" and her use of the deep image is admirably mentioned. The result is a self-absorbed, baroque monologue addressed to a nameless "you" and filled with images of fire, flame, winter, gardens, sea, river, rocks, birds, bone and skin. There are no place-names, no titles, no punctuation (and no humour), but the work is divided into separate short instalments, each alone on its page with a lot of clean white space. Much of the

content is erotic: "you are the undeciphered obelisk / guarding the entry / the temple pillar / that holds the walls apart / the dome / distending the dark vault". The blurb's note that "it has been a threat of . . . her own death that has given this love its new life" inhibits further comment.

R. F. Brissenden is of the same generation, but has remained untouched by new influences from abroad. His present collection includes a sestina, no more interesting than most examples of this tedious form, and several sonnets (*Skeiches from Herodotus*, retold in not particularly distinguished verse). He has a number of poems on classical themes, competently done but rather too smooth and well-mannered apart from an occasional false note - "Medea, in an updating of Ovid, muses 'Daddy is impossible!' Brissenden's zoological pieces, about a toad, snails and protozoa, are more appealing, but his whale poem drowns in the classics again, with Arion summoned on his dolphin for the final effect. Then there are elegies, poems for friends, childhood reminiscences, and a sequence of travel-notes about Indonesia; these are in a more relaxed style, and succeed to their presentation of scenes and people, although there's perhaps too much wonderment at the paradoxicality of it all.

Overall one has the impression of a man who enjoys writing poetry and has acquired many of the necessary skills; but a certain urgency is lacking, and the urbane technique is not quite polished enough.

William Grono and Nicholas Hasluck share a volume, padded out with illustrations. Hasluck goes in for sequences about places: Roulston, land, with holiday-makers; a satirically-imagined Sydney; nineteenth-century Cornwall, where the speaker contemplates joining his brother on the Australian goldfields. The descriptions are adequate in their quiet way, but Hasluck's talent seems more suited to fiction, which he also writes, than verse. One poem about "Islands" is about nonexistent spots of land which have found their way on to maps: "Voyages of discovery, deep / into the chanted wastes, / were then required / to move them off."

Grono too achieves a successful poem, in "Separation", and a few near-misses. For the most part, though, his tone is uncertain, veering from the sentimental to the facetious, and his eximations limp slightly. These two poets, both from Western Australia, seem peacefully indifferent to questions of style.

A spirit above wars

By Andrew Motion

JOHN LEHMANN:
The English Poets of the First World War
144pp. 58 illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £6.95.
0 500 01256 3

In 1917 Robert Graves wrote to Wilfred Owen: "For God's sake cheer up and write more optimistically - The war's not ended yet but a poet should have a spirit above wars." This is reported in *The English Poets of the First World War* as a suggestion that Owen "should sometimes write more cheerful poems". The blandness of style and the emasculation of a complex point are typical of John Lehmann's book. It persistently retreats from criticism into chat ("Sometimes a note of deep sadness appears to modify the bitterness" of Sassoon's poems), firing off a few dry facts as it goes. (Edward Thomas did write poetry at the Front; only once, but in an introductory survey of this sort accuracy is the least one can ask.)

Apart from simply recalling the main figures and their achievements, Lehmann only discusses three general matters of much interest. The first is well known and well documented. First World War poetry falls roughly into two kinds: the gleeful and jingoistic patriotism exemplified by Rupert Brooke gave way after the Somme to the warnings and passionate chastisements of Sassoon, Owen and Rosenberg. The other two themes are less often discussed even now, and until Paul Fussell published *The Great War and Modern Memory* in 1975 were almost completely ignored. One is how a number of poems written early as well as late in the war are profoundly literary in their inspiration and reference. Owen, in particular, seems to steady himself in his titles and opening lines by glancing at another writer - at Shelley, for instance, in "Strange Love". His purpose is not so much confidence-giving as to show how reversal, specific but submerged reminders of the pastoral tradition are often poignantly introduced into a context of barbarous ugliness. (While people behave inhumanly, the poems argue, nature is unnatural.)

There are impressive lines in some of these. Describing the appearance of snow on the Malvern hills for instance he writes: "In one swift move, / like a brilliant chess player, / winter has taken it all. / But other poems would benefit from ruthless pruning. Clough would do well to heed James Kirkup's assertion that "most normal poems contain too many words".

O love, your eyes lose lure
When I behold eyes blinded in my stead.

"Greater Love" also illustrates the second of Lehmann's points that derive from Fussell: "the peculiar conditions of front-line warfare, when danger of death and mutilation are ever present, inevitably intensified comradeship into something deeper and more emotional: the beautiful young man dying in the arms of his fellow soldier or officer could hardly fail to arouse feelings very close to love." It is undeniably true that much of the best work by Sassoon, Owen and Ivor Gurney - for instance - is characterized by a strong homo-erotic element. But it is a consideration which needs extremely careful treatment if its effect is to be accurately gauged. For all its intensity, the homo-eroticism of something like Owen's fragment "I saw his round mouth's crimson deepen as it fell", or Gurney's wonderful lyric "To His Love", is extraordinarily restrained and utterly unselfconscious.

He's gone, and all our plans
Are useless indeed.
We'll walk no more on Cotswold
Where the sheep feed
Quietly and take no heed.

His body that was so quick
Is not as you
Knew it, on Severn river
Under the blue sky
Driving our small boat through.
Lehmann's rather unguarded handling of this theme means that he risks conveying its delicate and often cryptic intimacies. In doing so, he underestimates the subtlety with which it helps to answer Graves's appeal for "a spirit above wars". Its sorrowful and frustrated expressions of affection are widely and generally applicable, while at the same time evoking an actual and immediate context.

This revised 6th edition of *The Arts Council's Poetry Library's Short-Titles Catalogue*, compiled by Jonathan Barker with an introduction by Philip Larkin (132pp. Arts Council of Great Britain/Carcanet. £5.95 and £2.95 paperback. 0 85635 3949) lists alphabetically some 8,000 collections of poems by British poets; American poets, translations of foreign poets into English included in the Poetry Library at 9, Long Acre, London WC2Z, among them are included Djuna Barnes's *The Book of Repulsive Women*, Ray Bradbury's *Where Robert Melt and Robert Men Rine Round in Robot Town*, Max Ernst's *Une Semaine de Bonté*, Norman Mailer's *Deaths for the Ladies*, Pablo Picasso's *Hunk of Skin*, and Raymond Radiguet's *Collected Poems*.

Representing thought

By Colin McGinn

JERRY A. FODOR:
Representations
Philosophical Essays on the Foundations of Cognitive Science
343pp. Brighton: Harvester £22.50.
0 85527 977 X

In *Mental Acts*, published in 1957, P. T. Geach proposed that judgment be understood in terms of "mental utterances" in an "interior language". Judging, he supposed, consists in the mind's exercise of concepts, and the content of a judgment comprises a complex of ideas which represent things in the world; his suggestion was that these ideas be identified with words - to judge that the sky is blue is to say in one's heart "the sky is blue". This theory, or something very like it, has recently been advocated by Jerry Fodor (among others) under the title "the language of thought".

Geach's early statement of the theory is not mentioned. In this new collection of essays, mostly reprints of earlier publications, Fodor's chief concern is to expound and defend (the "ontology of thought contents"). None is the idea that syntactic properties might do duty for sense; just a detachable aberration; for once the need of sense is acknowledged the question becomes acute as to whether there remains any useful work for internal sentences to perform. If we require non-syntactic mental representations anyway, then why not make do with these and let upon these formulae.

Fodor holds that RTM is (a) a substantive and controversial thesis and (b) an empirical thesis, one whose acceptability must finally turn upon how successfully it serves the theoretical needs of the cognitive psychologist. But Fodor's way of presenting the issues is misleading. Surely everyone (except behaviourists and the confused) would agree that thinking involves the structured deployment of concepts, and that concepts are (or correspond to) mental elements which somehow represent the world? What is substantive and controversial is not RTM as such, but the linguistic turn Fodor gives to it. Fodor's presentation obscures this because he writes as if the choice were between accepting the language of thought and rejecting altogether the idea that thought involves the mental exercises of concepts. Geach's original thesis, that properly separated the platitude from the contentious; he first introduced the idea of mental representations, leaving it open what the representations were to be, and only later proposed that words play the role of representing ideas. The real issue, then, is not whether RTM is true, but what sort of item a mental representation or concept is.

It is partly this conflation of issues which explains Fodor's insistence that RTM is an empirical thesis. For whereas it is arguable that the internal language theory is answerable to the theoretical requirements of empirical psychology, it is scarcely to be imagined that psychological experiments should induce us to abandon the philosophical thesis that thinking consists in the exercise of concepts. Fodor is well aware that he is reviving a philosophical account of thought at least as old as the works of Descartes and Locke, but he likes to suggest that nowadays the philosophers can and should hand over their problems to the scientists and await their verdict. But really it is not that RTM is philosophically respectable only so long as psychologists find it experimentally fruitful; rather, psychologists are obliged to conceive the mind in this way precisely because RTM is (or is not) acceptable on pre-theoretic or philosophical grounds. Contrary to what Fodor suggests, philosophy of mind is not in the process of being engulfed by "cognitive science".

The thesis that thinking is the internal manipulation of sentences invites the question how these sentences acquire semantic significance: in virtue of what do they have a

meaning for the thinker? Fodor treats this crucial question with notable caution, but his view seems to be that the internal sentences enjoy significance in virtue of two sorts of properties: syntactical or "formal" properties, which determine the role of a thought content in the thinker's mental life; and genuinely semantic properties - reference, satisfaction, truth - relating the internal words to the world. Anyone familiar with Frege's writings will wonder what has happened to the level of sense, i.e. the association of cognitively significant concepts with words considered as syntactic objects. What Fodor seems to want to suggest is that mere syntax can discharge the duties of sense, that the "shape" of internal symbols can function as their cognitive meaning.

But once this suggestion is made explicit the idea looks hopeless - mere uninterpreted syntax has no representational significance; we need some apparatus which assigns concepts to the internal words or else they will be literally senseless. The relational semantic properties will not do the job since, as Fodor recognizes, they cannot account for the different ways in which the same object may be mentally represented (the "opacity" of thought contents). None is the idea that syntactic properties might do duty for sense; just a detachable aberration; for once the need of sense is acknowledged the question becomes acute as to whether there remains any useful work for internal sentences to perform. If we require non-syntactic mental representations anyway, then why not make do with these and let upon these formulae.

Interpreting people

By Adam Morton

GRAHAM MACDONALD and PHIL PETTIT
Semantics and Social Science
194pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £2.95 (paperback, £4.95).
0 7100 0783 3

The thesis of this book is simple and, if true, important: that there is one human science that is basic and exemplary for all social sciences - semantics. By reflecting on how the meaning of words can be understood we can, according to Graham MacDonald and Philip Pettit, get answers to methodological questions which are as old as social science itself. On their view - though they don't put it this way - semantics is to the social sciences as mathematical physics is to the natural sciences: a model of what can be achieved and an achievement that any other science must take account of. One can see the appeal of the idea. Crudely: social science is about understanding people, and isn't the interpretation of people's words the basic and exemplary element in understanding them?

It need not be. Individual speakers are members of communities, and both individuals and communities are governed by laws which may be far richer than the linguistic behaviour they lead to. Fundamental questions about the relation between understanding societies and understanding individuals, and about the form of the principles one can adduce in explaining the social actions of individuals, are thus raised by the claim that semantics is the basic social science. MacDonald and Pettit do not address these questions in the particular case of semantics. Rather, they simply assume a particular semantic point of view and then derive some conclusions about these same questions in a more general setting.

The point of view they adopt is that of Donald Davidson. They take over from Davidson the idea that the core of a theory of a language is a conditions under which its sentences are true. They follow Davidson further in accepting, as a rough guide to finding these truth condi-

the internal words go? Of course we are then left with the real question - what a concept is. But the language of thought, so far from answering that question, conceals the need to ask it, while silently helping itself to resources whose characterization is the point at issue. Perhaps Fodor's proneness to suppose that syntax can add up to sense comes from the feeling that words in a mental medium, unlike spoken words, are somehow intrinsically interpreted - this along with undue concentration on the workings of computers.

RTM and the language of thought are not the only topics discussed in *Representations*; there is independently interesting material on functionalism, on realism about the mental, on reduction, artificial intelligence semantics, and the doctrine of innate ideas. Most of this seemed to me salutary and often stimulating - the mental is held to be real, irreducible to the physical, and more perplexing than some people suppose - but there are a number of shaky points, mainly concerning the relation between mental and physical, and the issues of Innateness.

Fodor wishes to argue, reasonably enough, that the explanatory role of thought content is not preserved under neurophysiological reduction. His ostensible reason for this is that the "standard notion" of reduction permits the loss of structure in mental content. The argument, is obscure, and the claim is so hedged that it often looks empty; at any rate, the alleged consequence of reduction seems easily circumvented simply by requiring that the predi-

cates in the reducing neurophysiological theory preserve the complexity of the predicates in the reduced psychological theory - a requirement one would think it natural to impose from the start. There is also what must be some sort of slip on Fodor's part about the distinction between identifying mental particulars with brain events (token identity) and identifying mental properties with brain properties (type identity). Fodor asserts, incorrectly, that the former identification relates only to *all* actual mental particulars, while the latter identifies all *possible* mental particulars with physical events. This is a mistake, since the latter identification does not entail that for any possible instance of a given mental property, the corresponding physical event is of the *same* physical type; every possible coloured object is identifiable with some object having it, but it does not follow that the property of being red is identifiable with the property of having a certain mass.

About the innateness of concepts Fodor makes a surprising claim: he suggests that, understood correctly, both empiricists and nativists agree that primitive concepts are unlearned and so innate; they disagree fundamentally only over which concepts are primitive; the empiricist finding conceptual complexity where the nativist describes simplicity. This latter point is interesting and probably right, but Fodor is surely in error in his claim that this is the only dispute - in particular, in his claim that empiricists accept the innateness of primitive concepts. He arrives at this unorthodox position

beliefs and desires, there is nothing in the orthodox conception of agency that could be refuted by further evidence or further scientific development. The second is a claim that one could not accept a generalization about some social regularity unless one thought that it was a law of nature (and not simply an accidental series of coincidences), and that one would be unlikely to believe this unless one could see how the regularity might in principle be explained as resulting from the actions of individuals.

This third is an attempt to apply Davidson's principles to the interpretation of a culture's ethical principles. MacDonald and Pettit argue that one crucial determinant of whether one ascribes any objective truth or falsity to the values of another culture (in comparison with one's own) is the extent to which one links the ascription of a desire to someone as prescribing just the way that person feels. Their discussion is rather tentative and tangled at this point, as indeed it must be, but they do not seem to acknowledge that doubts about the interpretation of belief and desire somewhat undermine their basic Davidsonian premise. These three claims involve the authors in what seem to me to be the most interesting analyses in the book: the discussion at these points is heavily dependent on what other philosophers have written, however, and their treatment of these authors is too quick to be satisfying, and too technical to be easily digested by the non-philosophers at whom the book is partly aimed.

Their main claim remains very controversial. There may be a single discipline which can serve as a map through the human sciences, but MacDonald and Pettit have not yet established that there is, let alone that it is Davidsonian semantics. Most importantly, their basic idea, that the "orthodox" conception of agency can serve as a fixed constraint on theorizing about human beings, needs some further explanation. My uncertainties about it are of two kinds. First, it is not clear exactly what the orthodox conception is, and I have used to paraphrase their thought, and a number of interesting details emerge. There are worth mulling over.

The first is an argument that, since the information provided by an explanation of an action in accordance with the "orthodox" conception consists not in any principles associated with that conception but solely in the ascription to an agent of various

beliefs and desires, there is nothing in the orthodox conception of agency that could be refuted by further evidence or further scientific development. The second is a claim that one could not accept a generalization about some social regularity unless one thought that it was a law of nature (and not simply an accidental series of coincidences), and that one would be unlikely to believe this unless one could see how the regularity might in principle be explained as resulting from the actions of individuals.

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gures are prime examples of it, as must be the models of decision-making found in microeconomics. But why in the general pattern that includes both of these? Is psychology a permissible depiction of human motives? How must macroeconomic models be tied to microeconomic studies? And even if we take the orthodox conception as understood, since it is clear enough what the authors mean to be included in it, uncertainties remain about the force of the constraint they intend to impose on our theorizing. Must all theorizing about people be consistent with it, or only that which we choose to include under the label "social science"? Are the parts of psychology and of economics that seem to ignore or even contradict it illegitimate, or simply not social sciences?

This book is clearly flawed, in terms of both exposition and argument. It is clearly interesting, too; it makes one think of old problems in a new way. My suspicion is that the line of argument they are developing will eventually show a rather upside-down version of their conclusion: instead of resolving methodological problems in social science by confronting them with the transparent example of semantics, we will find as we push ahead with the science of language that the familiar difficulties of a social science will appear, there too and that there will be no easy way around them. This is not to say that there is no way around them, though; nor is it to deny that the way may be of very general application, as MacDonald and Pettit believe.

Modern Philosophy: An Introduction by A. R. Lacey, has just been published (246pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £2.95, paperback, £3.95, 0 7100 0974 7). Written in an attractively straightforward style, it is designed to provide an introduction to the subject for "intending students, first-year undergraduates and interested laymen" and seeks to reveal "the close links between various branches of philosophy". Part One deals with particular topics with chapters on: free will, truth, value judgments, implication, laws of nature, meaning, mind and body, scepticism and language, the basis of morals, and works of art. Part Two is more general, offering a survey of recent developments.

Instant enlightenment

By Wendy Cope

JAMES KIRKUP:
Dongonban Messages
130pp. Kyoto Editions, Union Services, PO Box 205, Osaka-Minami, Osaka 542-91, Japan. £2.

S. D. P. CLOUGH:
Home to the Haiku Masters
114pp. S. D. P. Clough, 14 St Ann's Road, Majorca, Majorca, 07063, 0135.

The "dongonban" of James Kirkup's title is a green noticeboard found on Japanese railway stations on which travellers can write in chalk. Kirkup's "messages" are his one-line poems, the fruits of an interest in the form that was born when he first went to Japan and learned about *kado* and *haikai*, the comic sayings used in Zen Buddhist training.

Twenty years later his enthusiasm is such that he would like to see one-line poems not only on railway stations, but also in buses and trains, on bridges and T-shirts, thrown into the sea in bottles, tied to balloons, and even "cultivating our drab British landscape with them". This last suggestion might prove dangerous: it is, Kirkup says in his introduction,

tion is true. "A one-line poem", he claims, "is instant enlightenment . . . it acts upon our system like a bolt from the blue or a brisk amphetamine injection". Most probably, the average British pedestrian would react with customary sang-froid to the worst that Kirkup has to offer, the macabre ("I sliced her boiled breasts, very finely", the personal "I can eat on my public hat"), the narrative ("The hippopotamus is having a heart attack"), the pretentious ("I am the wandering Jew of modern literature") and the feebly humorous ("I described my bowel movements on the turd programme").

Some of the better one-liners are lyrical - "Infinite shores of sounding gongs" - a dead tree sobs in the striking metaphor - "night skyscrapers" - "unabsorbed, grassy word puzzles". Others, comment on human life - "sickness is the summer vacation of the poet".

Kirkup regards all the poems in *Dongonban Messages* as *haiku* or *senryu*, and reflects the view that these forms, when written in English, should necessarily contain seventeen syllables. Those that do, are often twice as long as their counterparts in Japanese.

be considered as material for longer poems". His "linked" versions of Japanese *haikai* spell out and elaborate what the "masters" merely suggest, and rarely come anywhere near the effectiveness of the original. Basho's haiku "A banked fire / on the garden wall / a visitor's shadow," for example, has inspired a poem which begins:

Contemplating
the slow and elaborate
death of coals
I brood once more
on the human dilemma.
Is there any point
any point at all
in our ceaseless activity

Home to the Haiku Masters also includes versions of *tanka* and *kyōka* (traditional poems of three lines with fourteen to sixteen syllables in each) and translations of some fine prose passages by Basho, as well as poems that are entirely Clough's own.

There are impressive lines in some of these. Describing the appearance of snow on the Malvern hills for instance he writes: "In one swift move, / like a brilliant chess player, / winter has taken it all. / But other poems would benefit from ruthless pruning. Clough would do well to heed James Kirkup's assertion that "most normal poems contain too many words".

S. D. P. Clough believes that "very short originals such as *haikai*" can

Campaigners against cruelty

By Brian Harrison

JAMES TURNER:

Reckoning with the Beast,
Animals, Pain, and Humanity in the
Victorian Mind
224pp. Johns Hopkins University
Press, £7.50.
0 8018 23994

Although George Stubbs's green monkey adorns James Turner's dust-jacket and chapter-headings, it is not so much the animals, more the pain they endured that is his theme. And although he pays detailed attention to nineteenth-century evidence on the growth of kindness to animals, his book is more an extended speculative essay in the history of ideas than a detailed exploration of new documentary sources.

Turner takes attitudes to animals to illustrate his claim that the nineteenth century "was... an era of enhanced sensitiveness to animal pain". Confining his attention to developments in Britain and America, he argues that insofar as kindness to animals did prevail before then (and it didn't much), it was directed more at the individual, not than at the entire species, and its motive lay more in elevating the human character than in alleviating the animal's pain.

But from the late eighteenth century, animals profited from a three-fold conjunction of events. The scientists demonstrated similarities between animal and human anatomy; the radicals extended to animals their preoccupation with "rights"; and an industrial society simultaneously distanced people from the farmer's routinized cruelty and loaded the prosperous middle classes with guilt at their employees' sufferings. Turner argues that self-interest required them to unload this guilt on animals; the creators of industrial society, "felt at the back of the mind the guilt and fear that were the price of affluence. They wanted to wipe out the shame and fright, but not the prosperity that came with it."

For animal lovers, Darwinism was a help rather than a hindrance, for they used it to emphasize the humanity of the animals rather than the animality of man. Indeed, the brute was transformed into "a sort of high-minded curate in fur", a sort of exemplar of mankind's more admirable qualities. And the less likely it seemed that suffering in this world would be compensated by bliss in the next, the more necessary it seemed to eliminate pain wherever it could be found.

At this point, however, a fierce antagonism grew up within the humanitarian camp between the animal-lover whose assault on pain was unadulterated and the doctor whose pursuit of health lay through vivisection. The educated middle-class man, in whom so many humanitarian hopes had been vested, seemed now to be betraying the cause from within. By the early twentieth century, however, the achievements of endocrinologists and others were forcing the anti-vivisectionists on to the defensive, and the opponents of animal cruelty, no longer able to capitalize on middle-class guilt at the unfamiliarity of industrial society, narrowed their preoccupations to the welfare of pets. The humanitarian, instead of elevating himself above animals through his benevolence towards them, stepped down to occupy a humbler role within nature's complex and interdependent web. Humanitarianism remained, but mankind was now to be punished for its sins, not by an avenging Deity, but by ecological catastrophe.

It is an ambitious argument, somewhat unconvincing in its presentation, somewhat overwritten, but continuously analytical and inquisitive in approach, and bringing together related developments whose history is too often studied in isolation. Yet there is the nagging suspicion that Turner has not overcome three dangers involved in his speculative approach to historical writing: that his new material is not sufficiently

abundant to bear the extended speculation he loads upon it; his study of attitudes to animals among what he calls "premodern Europeans", like his allegations about the contracted perspectives of the twentieth-century animal-lovers, is rather too cursory for the reader to share his confidence that the nineteenth century did indeed see the growth of a distinctive sensibility.

But even within the nineteenth century, where his study of the documents is more thorough (though as far as the United Kingdom is concerned it is really thorough only for the 1820s and 30s), his speculations sometimes lead him astray. He is certainly incorrect in seeing RSPCA work as becoming "slowly constricted" in Britain from the 1870s, avoiding "contentious issues like field sports and factory farming" in favour of preoccupation with kindness to pets. On the contrary, the Society had been timid about field sports from its foundation in 1824, and it had no need to worry about factory-farming (which from the late-nineteenth century it proceeded to do) until such methods came into widespread use.

Secondly, Turner succumbs to river intellectualism in the attribution of motive. It should in fairness be said that he recognizes the danger; discussing his ingenious "displacement of guilt" thesis on the nineteenth-century growth of kindness to animals, for instance, he admits that this "would be impossible to document; no animal lover would confess such motives, even if conscious of them". The historian is not, of course, obliged to confine himself to explanations of conduct uttered by participants at the time. Yet his hypotheses ought to rest on relevant research where feasible. It would be quite possible to investigate the relative range of philanthropic concern displayed by leading nineteenth-century animal-lovers, though Turner does not do so. In the absence of such research, one can only say that guilt was certainly not displaced away from human beings among the following of the Society's most prominent supporters - Wilberforce, William Adams Smith, T. F. Buxton, Shaftesbury, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, J. S. Buckingham, Lord Aberdeen and Cardinal Manning.

Turner also tends rather too easily to assume that the absence of a mid-Victorian welfare state deprives humane feelings of human-beneficiaries altogether, whereas in reality it merely diverts such feelings into

the fully-absorbing intimacies of personal charity. He tends also to assume that the dominance of *laissez faire* (not as dominant as he thinks by the way - the 1833 and 1844 Factory Acts and legislation on emigrant ships spring to mind) in economic matters necessarily entails indifference to conditions among industrial populations. On the contrary, it was in J. S. Mill - to take only one prominent political economist - reform (education, birth control, even factory reform) which forsook *laissez faire* in many respects.

But it is necessary to adduce such complex motives for humanitarian conduct when simpler and more obvious ones will do? Attention surely needs to be focused on the internal dynamics of the humanitarian community; in the animal cruelty world it begins in the 1820s, with animals brutally driven to Smithfield Market through the London streets, and by the end of the century has extended to the conservation of threatened species, the plight of pit-ponies and control over the international trade in horses. There is, in other words, a continuously broadening, self-generating, legislatively accumulative preoccupation with the evil itself, as the humanitarians gradually work out its full implications. Apart from the question of animals, this process fosters a broadening concern - starting with slaves and climbing-bones, and going on to drunkards, prostitutes, lunatics and others, until the global and analytic modern preoccupation with the causes of poverty and war is fully matured.

Turner's discussion of the humanitarian's motives highlights a third drawback of his method. His lack of detailed research, having encouraged him to over intellectualize in the interpretation of motive, paradoxically leads him in other respects to oversimplify. He sees kindness to animals as emanating from middle-class people "at heart happy with their up-to-date industrial world", who are in some sense "conformists"; his approach to them is to forget that nineteenth-century Britain was still predominantly aristocratic in its political culture, and was only slowly and painfully being colonized for "industrial" values. Even the battle to substitute an educational for a prosecuting policy within the RSPCA - whose ultimate success Turner sees as symbolic of middle-class control - was far more protracted and hard-won than he allows. Far from being conformists,

many RSPCA humanitarians felt embattled within a hostile culture.

Humanitarianism was in reality anti-rural and anti-aristocratic, and therefore anti-Establishment, in its objectives. As late as 1975 the Conservative MP for Cirencester and Tewkesbury could still be found defending hare-coursing in Parliament with the argument that "it was nature's way that animals were cruel to each other... it was a natural function of the dog to chase the hare".

At one point Turner seems to recognize the aristocratic nature of nineteenth-century British public life when he notes that RSPCA annual meetings "positively bristled with titles". But rather surprisingly this does not lead him to stress its major asset - the affection felt by the British upper classes for their animals. This was shrewdly exploited by the full - hence the Society's consistent timidity on field sports. Yet Turner turns this, too, against the RSPCA, depreciating the "well-mannered, well-tailored" approach adopted under its secretary John Colam. Prudence should never be mistaken for lack of courage, yet from Turner's

account one would hardly guess the courage was relevant here. It is necessary perhaps to remind oneself of the RSPCA Inspector killed by a cockfight at Henworth in 1838, or of Colam himself jumping into the ring running its final quietus in 1862. Although he had risked numerous lawsuits since his appointment in 1862, Colam received his first real for malicious prosecution only in 1893, and was told admiringly by one of his employers that "if he had would have risen to the top of the tree".

The great virtue of Turner's approach is its recognition that the perceptions of contemporaries and the interrelatedness of things. If at times he displays the faults of his virtues, criticism should not detract from the importance of his subject or from the interest and intelligence that continuously inform his argument - only say that he has started enough sprightly hares for a pack of academic hounds to pursue.

Peninsular pride

By Peter Stead

DAVID W. JAMES:

St. David's and Dewi-lan
A Social History
228pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, £9.95.
0 7083 0797 3

First-time visitors to St David's invariably experience ambivalent reactions. The cathedral is large, it has a beautiful interior and it is magnificently situated in a large hollow. There is, however, a very strong sense of anachronism. Visitors rarely have travelled from Cardiff and especially the very long forty-six miles from Carmarthen. Then there are all those "ridiculous" about the city which is also a village. It takes a while to resolve these feelings. It is only when your guide reminds you that you are nearer to Ireland than to Carmarthen or when one walks the short distance to the sea that the final realization comes that a visit to St David's necessitates not only a longer chronology but also a different geography.

St David's owes its existence to what we should now always think of as the Celtic Sea. In recent years several scholars have successfully conveyed their fascination with this sea and David W. James has clearly been inspired by their work. He looks at the small peninsula and he evokes its history. He knows its geology and reports it as if for a local newspaper. "Thee-forward it was a matter of constant earth movements, of faulting and thrusting and deposition, of moving glaciers, of erosion and melting and rising and sinking of sea levels." Into this landscape he introduces his various tribes and again one would swear that he had been an eye-witness. "They came, short, dark haired and dark eyed, from the Mediterranean, from southern France and Spain, and probably originally from the Bible lands of the East."

We are carried very quickly forward to this area's period of greatness as a centre of the Celtic Church. An inspiration for land like the tribes earlier, it came from the Mediterranean, from eastern Europe and from the Middle East itself. The Celtic saints, we are reminded, were great travellers, perhaps as keen to go on tour as later Welsh Rugby teams. There was much coming and going, and this favoured spot where David built his monastery became, as Professor Emrys Bowen points out in his introduction to this book, "in its day and age a veritable Ploceidilly Circus". David James tells this early story

well. He reviews the evidence for the historical David, traces the extent of his influence (there are fifty-three churches dedicated to him in west Wales and others in Ireland and Brittany) and then goes on to examine the development and use of the St David myth as the Celtic community was constrained to come to terms with William the Conqueror and the Norman Church. The myth was the weapon at hand that writers like Rhygyfarch and Gerald the Welshman could use to ward off the Normans and to protect older traditions and customs.

The truth was, and clearly Dr James it was a sad truth, that the Normans did come and Britain's old sea became an ecclesiastical backwater. Much of the glamour goes out of local social history and are taken on a guided tour of the available sources for the history of the village and its surrounding farms. This is not an easy subject, as things were complicated by the way in which the Bishop became a feudal and Marcher lord in his own right. The Church was the great feudal power and landlord in these parts and, ever after the Reformation, it was only with the Parish Council in 1894 that an alternative focus of power emerged.

There are some good local sources, especially those relating to farm life (we are told how guillemot eggs from Ramsey Island were sent to Bristol "to refine wine for the wealthy"); but in general the story is an ordinary one, for nothing much has happened to this village since the days of David. Most readers would want more on the medieval decline and certainly more on the dramatic rebuilding of the cathedral, first under Nash in the 1790s and then under Sir Gilbert Scott in the 1860s. Every reader, though, will sense David James's strong nostalgia, for while he has clear sympathies with the early Methodists, his story is largely concerned with the way in which the glories of the Celtic saints were dissipated by the successive tragedies of the Normans and the Protestant Reformation, by the failure of the Victorian railway builders to reach St David's and by the abolition of the old county of Pembrokeshire. This is now the age of the Pembrokeshire National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It is above all the age of the tourists, the most imaginative of whom will be inspired by the cathedral, and perhaps even by this book, into recalling past glories and find their journey one of pilgrimage.

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F. R. O. GOODYEAR (Editor):

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"The scholarly stalker," J. P. V. D. Balsdon once remarked, "generally comes upon Tacitus from behind, approaching him (like Pippin) by way of Hellenistic historiography, to whose precepts he was, like his master Sallust, often strikingly faithful; or (like Walser) by way of Roman education in rhetoric and the strong marks which such education left on him; or even (like Mendell recently) through the artistic development of Tacitus' own style."

Note the stress on style. Ranke declared that it is only through form that the works of the mind are elevated above commonplace. This being so, the historian Polybius, for example, fails to achieve the topmost heights because, although what he says is enormously worthwhile, he writes in such tedious and unattractive Greek. Tacitus' Latin, on the other hand, was fantastic and unique. Balsdon's observations appeared in a review of Sir Ronald Syme's *Tacitus* (1958), which launched a wave of Tacitean studies. Their present exponent, Ronald Martin, who holds one of the chairs of Classics in the University of Leeds, claims to have Latinless readers in mind. It may help us to assess the validity of this claim if we recall what Syme has to say about Tacitus' complex, subtle, sinewy, densely textured, shocking style.

[Tacitus' *Histories*] attest an increasing divergence from the normal and conventional, an insistent predilection for unusual grammatical forms or constructions, for a vocabulary vivid, powerful, solemn and archaic... [In the *Annals*] it is his habit to operate by echo and allusion, most insidiously. Sometimes it is the daring expression, the shock which compels belief. Elsewhere, by contrast, the word may be ordinary or conventional, but of rare occurrence in the *Annals*; repeated, it conveys a parallel, deliberate, always bitter, harsh juxtaposition... Potential subtle contrivances, compel the sound to convey the sense - alliteration, assonance, light or ponderous words, short phrases in sequence or a long development... Elevation is one of Tacitus' favourite devices for irony and for mockery... Similarly, the employment of bathos... The archaic colouring of Tacitus is deep and pervasive - forms and spellings, words, meanings, and constructions... He borrows from his model [Sallust] - but, often and more significant, he resorts to free composition in the Sallustian manner.

Syme having expressed all these undoubted truths with such brilliance, it is rather surprising to read in the blurb to Martin's book of his intention to "show that the century-old dichotomy between Tacitus the stylist and Tacitus the historian is fallacious." However, Martin himself puts the matter right when he comments that Syme's book has "as its implicit, but fundamental, aim to demonstrate that the historian and stylist are one." And so they are. Gibbon's assertion that an author's style is the image of his mind is amply applicable to Tacitus whose astonishing Latin is an integral and essential component of his whole historical achievement (Macaulay somewhat profitably suggested that he would have been a better historian without it).

This idiosyncrasy of style makes it easy to understand why his contemporaries felt some of the same difficulty as we feel today. True, the content of his writings did not appeal to them either, since their tastes ran rather to piquant personal biography and panegyric. But the main problem was his style. This was so demanding and odd that he left no school and attracted little interest for centuries, during which his works were within an ace of disappearing altogether.

The historian as stylist

By Michael Grant

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This same style creates a tricky situation for Professor Martin and the Latinless readership that he hopes to attract (and his book fully warrants the hope). For how, if we do not know Latin, can we gain any effective understanding of Tacitus' virtues? It is not patronizing to ask this question. Indeed, the whole force of Roman literary studies (seen as extending beyond the borders of classic departments) depends on obtaining a satisfactory answer to it. And worse still: only if we have studied Latin very thoroughly indeed (and not only Tacitus but all the other writers whom he is skillfully echoing or adapting or taking off), shall we be at length in a position to grasp adequately what Tacitus is trying to do or say. The same is true of Hellenistic poets such as Callimachus or Theocritus. Even to begin to grasp what they are aiming at, we have to possess an extensive knowledge of Greek literature and literary attitudes, past and contemporary: otherwise the tricks and jokes that make them what they are have no meaning at all.

This is not just pessimism, but states a situation to which Tacitean scholars such as Martin need to give serious thought. And it is a situation from which it falls to the lot of translators to save us in so far as they possibly can - and they can, I believe, do something. I have tried to be one of them. So I might be expected, perhaps, to feel miffed when Martin remarks: "I know of no English translation that, for any sustained length of time, conveys the

flavour of Tacitus' Latinity." However, far from being resentful, I entirely agree with him. For how can earth such a translator bring out all the devices that Syme has enumerated?

Nor, as a matter of fact, do I myself believe that he ought even to try to. This is because a translator has got to write *English*: and the English language, as it speaks and is written today, does not provide the scope for a fraction of these Tacitean effects. If you attempt to reproduce them, you will be unreadable (controversial word, but I persist with it: for the controversy see *Ariel*, April 1971, pp. 7ff). And if you prove unreadable, you are not writing *English*, and are not, therefore, offering a translation at all. When Robert Graves translated the weird Latin of Apuleius, he remarked "paradoxical: the effect of oddness is lost in the convulsed times like the present by writing in as easy and sedate English as is possible." I felt "sedate" to be far too modest an assessment of his own admirable English style (leaving aside the embarrassing question of whether his translation is sufficiently accurate), and defended my own version of Tacitus (1956) in the following terms: "No amount of colourful or fanciful language will make the strange personality of Tacitus understandable to contemporary readers, who find rhetoric and the grand style unnatural and unreadable. Today the only faint hope of rendering his complexity lies in as pungent [amended from "trenchant and astinging"] a simplicity as the translator can achieve." If, however, I added, I am wrong, let someone prove it by successfully translating Tacitus according to the opposite principles.

Professor Martin has included substantial chunks of his own translations of Tacitus in his book. He is, of course, perfectly well aware of the difficulty of reproducing exalted or peculiar language in contemporary English, but on the one occasion when he explicitly addresses himself to the problem he does not seem to

bring us much further forward. He quotes a passage (*Ann.* I, 65, 1-2) in which a number of words possess, as he points out, "a quality that elevates them above the tone of normal prose: they are chosen deliberately to enhance what is clearly intended to be a piece of fine writing." Correct. But how does he render these words? They emerge, in English, as follows: "restless", "echoing woods", "sleepless", "fully on guard", "a terrible dream", (ghost of Verus) "rising from the marshes". There seems to be a slight confusion here. These are all emotionally fraught ideas, but the English Martin has used to convey them is not particularly fraught. And quite right too, in my opinion, because the poetic Tacitean terms cannot really be converted into English prose.

Martin's other versions, on the whole, are equally unsensational. But he is not so well justified in translating the very first sentence of *Ann.* XIII into an equally long sentence in English: long sentences do not produce the same effects in the two languages, and, indeed, his long sentence does not read like acceptable English at all. Nor, despite all Tacitus' archaic effects, do archaisms like "obloquy" and "victories of yore" and "he proffered his neck" fit comfortably into modern English. There seems to me a gratuitous stiffness in sentences like "what limit will there be to my recording that..." "The legion burst forth in wage formation!" "Do your work, if it is better so for the Roman people." Tacitus, too, is stiff when it serves his purpose, but in English it fails to come off. Moreover, epigrammatic renderings of Tacitean epigrams like "the besieged were torn by honour and desperate need between glory and disgrace" do not quite work either.

I have dwelt on these matters here because Tacitus' style is given great and deserved prominence by Martin, who knows very well that it is no mere embellishment but this author's

chosen vehicle of penetrating political judgment. Nevertheless, in order to avoid disproportion, it must be added that the book also deals very carefully with the other main aspects of Tacitus and his writings; indeed it mostly consists of a close and very useful analysis of each of those works in turn. The usual attention is paid to Tacitus' *unfairness* to some of his characters, and most of all, of course, to Tiberius - particularly by all those curious juxtapositions of accurate, favourable facts and damning innuendos. The slurs are heightened by the continual implied, and sometimes explicit, contrasts between the emperor and his handsome, approachable nephew Germanicus, whose shortcomings, though not entirely glossed over, were evidently worse than Tacitus is prepared to allow: indeed he turns out to be the nearest approach to a hero in the whole of the *Annals*. Martin brings all this out very well.

Germanicus is the dominant personality in the section of the work (I 55-81 and II) that has now been edited by F. R. D. Goodyear, and appears as the second volume in a project entitled *The Annals of Tacitus*, Books I-VI. The first volume came out in 1972, providing the initial instalment of the first major edition of the *Annals* since Furneaux (1896-1907). In both of Goodyear's volumes the additions to our knowledge that have been achieved since Furneaux are made very clear. The commentary to the first volume was particularly strong on the linguistic and literary side, and dealt thoroughly with the numerous thorny textual problems, which are Goodyear's principal interest. The second volume, however, as he points out, pays a good deal more attention to historical questions, on which his numerous judgments are sensible and comprehensive. When the third and successive volumes appear, as they will, we must hope, before long - Goodyear should have some useful things to say about the equivocal "partner of Tiberius' labours", Sejanus.

The Carthaginian enterprise

By B. H. Warmington

ERNEST BRADFORD:

Hannibal
223pp. Macmillan, £7.95.
0 333 28191 8

Alexander, Hannibal and Caesar were the three greatest generals of Mediterranean antiquity. Hannibal is the odd one out since the other two achieved, or more than achieved, their military and political objectives whereas he failed in both, yet he remains the subject of a steady stream of books. He is a notable exception to the rule that history is the propaganda of the victors since his main source for his career is Livy, the most wholeheartedly, not to say naively, patriotic of Roman historians. The Greek writer Polybius was more impartial and more accurate in detail but it has always been difficult to avoid being dominated by Livy's conception of Hannibal's war against Rome as that of a struggle between an individual of almost superhuman resourcefulness and the whole Roman people, whose very existence was at stake.

Indeed, one senses in some modern books on Hannibal, though not that of Ernest Bradford, more than a hint of a peculiarly English attitude - not just praise, but regret for a gallant loser. This attitude was quite alien to antiquity, and though Livy was not infrequently aware of this, he was not infrequently aware of Hannibal's feelings when he was recalled to Carthage after fifteen undefeated years in Italy, it was more often as a prime example of the vanity of ambition that he was remembered in the

world of Roman literary commonplace, for example in Juvenal's tenth satire. The philosopher Seneca, likewise in moralizing vein, took a similar view. Historians, he held, were inferior to philosophers because instead of dealing with the moral life of the human condition they handed down for posterity the actions of bandits - Seneca's word - like Philip and Alexander and other military background. The campaigns of Caesar can hardly be treated in isolation from the manoeuvres of Roman politics, nor Alexander's without an understanding of the nature of the Macedonian monarchy and its relations with the Greeks. In the case of Hannibal, as Bradford points out, our ignorance of almost every relevant aspect of Carthaginian politics and economic life is profound, primarily because Polybius and Livy had no interest in them. At least, however, we can agree with his view that Hannibal was supported logistically as far as was possible by his home city - where he seems never to have been between early boyhood and his final recall - but that the strategy of the war was his own. As the general of an army composed

almost entirely of mercenaries, he might look implausible as the military hope of a state engaged in a struggle for power over the whole western Mediterranean if it were not for the fact that Carthaginian armies had always consisted of mercenaries. Hannibal's victories, well described and analysed in the present book, were more strictly determined by his own strategic and tactical skills than by, say, superior weaponry, overwhelming numbers or morale.

But it was through such factors as these that Rome survived Hannibal and his army. The gods were on the side of the big battalions, represented by the reserve of manpower available to Rome from such of Italy. Through the organization of Italian communities into a system which, on the whole, accepted her hegemony, the city had saved itself by a policy of enlightened self-interest. Hannibal failed to do more than dent it. In spite of his victories on the battlefield and his intimidatory devastation, which he alternated with making inducements for Romans to defect, Rome's morale in the face of enormous losses attests a social cohesion in the republic of landowners and farmers which the Carthaginians should have rejoined before the first Punic war. At least, we can be sure, as Bradford remarks, that Carthage could never have built an empire like Rome's since her population was far too small. In the face of a Rome whose 'rewards of military expansion and success were structurally bound up with the struggles of the political elites, Hannibal's aim was thus strictly realistic. In this he could be said to have been out of date, rooted in the diplomatic pragmatism of the Hellenistic world and unable to appreciate that the Roman state was a power of a different order of magnitude. Within another generation the states of the Greek world had collapsed before Rome's power like a house of cards.

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How shall we mark it on our maps?
Its borders are flickle

As this fireflies I couldn't tell from stars
That night I tried to reach the sea
And foundered there, having lost the path

Somewhere between where it leaves the road
And where the dunes begin...

How shall we name it, colour it?
Or refer to it at all? Now this house
Is shaken to its roots by the big machines

That are scattering rocks and hammering
The raw ground down, making it level.
But the nights are dense with silence

Unrelieved by the insects' singing:
Silence of speech.
Interrupted, of those acres of marshland

Unrelieved by the insects' singing.

Charles Boyle

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By D. J. McKitterick

also draws our attention to, and has some interesting observations to make on, what he calls the tradition of the "instructive romance", a genre which is most obvious in Apuleius but which can also be found in (for example) Jewish tradition.

The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* is not a rare book even in the original edition printed by Aldus Manutius in 1499, and recently two new fascimiles have been published. George Painter's introduction to the loving reproduction of the work published by the Eugram Press in 1963 remains a milestone in the study of the *Hypnerotomachia*. The justification for the latest fascimile is given by the author's introduction.

The *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* always contains something that will prove extremely useful. This year, Helmut Urban and Claus W. Gerhardt survey very recent work in printing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in the twentieth century respectively. It would be a service if Professor Koppitz could ensure that these were offered regularly. (perhaps biennial) review articles on work on fifteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century printing too, as well as in other relevant fields such as illustration and binding. There are grounds for optimism that this suggestion will be taken up, for Koppitz, in a contribution of his own, shows 'himself to be keenly concerned with the dissemination of information about the history of the book. In a short critique of the *Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries and the Wolfenbüttel-Notizen zur Buchgeschichte*, he draws attention to their severe limitations. In the case of the *ABHB* both incomplete geographical coverage, and lack of attention to such important topics as codicology and studies of the reader, in the case of the *Notizen* concentration on Germany and, in the case of both publications, neglect of the contemporary popular literature provides the net for a certain type of emphasis, more on the work of

We know more about the author and the contents of the *Hyperperotomachia* than we do about the original edition of 1499. Martin Lowy, who recently argued persuasively about the friendly stance which Aldus was persuaded to print such a (for him) unusual book, has identified its illustrator as still not known for certain, and work has scarcely yet begun on establishing who exactly bought this large and beautiful book whose format was so obviously aimed at a new kind of dilettante book collector. As a specimen of printing this new facsimile leaves much to be desired since most of the original detail

The Hounslow Press, Toronto, has recently published the first bibliography devoted to the works of Algernon Blackwood. *Blackwood's Books* by John Robert Colombo (119p. \$9.95. 0-88882 005 0). In addition to listing the different impressions and editions of Blackwood's works, the volume also provides a list of his books by year of publication, an alphabetical list of stories with locations, a brief life of Blackwood with an account of his visits to Canada, a catalogue of works of his that have appeared in the theatre and on radio and television, an essay on Blackwood by Walter Gilliland and a select bibliography.

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